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THELYPHTHORA;

O R,  
A TREATISE ON  
FEMALE RUIN,  
IN ITS  
CAUSES, EFFECTS, CONSEQUENCES,  
PREVENTION, AND REMEDY;

CONSIDERED ON THE BASIS OF THE  
D I V I N E L A W:

Under the following HEADS, viz.  
MARRIAGE, || ADULTERY,  
WHOREDOM, and || POLYGAMY,  
FORNICATION, || DIVORCE;

With many other INCIDENTAL MATTERS;

PARTICULARLY INCLUDING  
An Examination of the Principles and Tendency of  
Stat. 26 GEO. II. c. 33.

COMMONLY CALLED  
THE MARRIAGE ACT.

*by Martin Madan.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

—What in me is dark  
Illumine, what is low raise and support;—  
That, to the height of this great argument,  
I may assert ETERNAL PROVIDENCE,  
And justify the ways of God to MEN.

MILTON.

L O N D O N:  
Printed for J. DODSLEY.

M.DCC.LXXX.



THE ELYPTHONIA

THE AUSTRIAN ON  
THE RUIN

CAUSE OF THE CONSEQUENCES  
ON THE RUIN

TO THE AUSTRIAN



WHICH IS THE  
OF THE AUSTRIAN

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# ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**HE AUTHOR doth not scruple to call this **TREATISE**, one of the most important and interesting Publications, that have appeared since the Days of the *Protestant Reformation*.

He has the Pleasure of assuring the **READER**, that this is not the Language of Vanity and Self-applause, but of the many eminently learned and pious Men, to whose Perusal the MS. was submitted, and with whose entire Approbation it makes its public Appearance.

To trace the Causes of *Female Ruin*, to point out a *Remedy* against it, in an Age when its Increase is most alarmingly progressive, is a **WORK**, which, surely, on the first Mention of it, ought to recommend itself to the most serious Consideration of every Well-wisher to the Peace, good Order, Comfort, and Welfare of Society.

The **AUTHOR** pretends to no Merit, as to any *new Discoveries* made on the Subjects herein treated—His Labours have been only directed to the Search of *Truth*, as revealed and recorded by the *Divine Wisdom*—to the Detection of Error, Superstition, and Falshood; as they appear in *Human Systems*, and as they are the Occasions of more Mischiefs to the World, than all the Wit or Wisdom of *Man* can ever obviate or remove.

He has endeavoured to avoid the tiresome *Dryness* which usually attends Treatise-writing; and, by the Introduction of much Variety of entertaining Matter, he flatters himself that the **READER** will not find Him to have been unmindful of **HORACE's** Rule:

*Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,  
Lectorem delectando pariterque monendo.* Ars. Poet.

#### IV ADVERTISEMENT.

As for the Success which shall attend this Undertaking, it must be left in the Hands of the *Supreme Disposer* of all Events, who can effect the greatest, the noblest, and most salutary Purposes, by the most unlikely, the weakest, and most unworthy Instruments.

One Thing is very certain, that the *Security and Protection* of the *Female Sex*, is one great Object of the *Divine Law*—but it is as certain, that we have departed from the System of the *Divine Government*, and that in the Eye of our Municipal Laws, *Women* are of less Consequence than the *Beasts of the Field*—for it is *less penal* to seduce, defile, and abandon to Prostitution and Ruin, a *thousand Women*, married or unmarried, than to *steal*, kill, or even *maliciously* to maim or wound, an *Ox* or a *Sheep*. See 22 & 23 Car. II. c. 7. § 2, 4; 9 Geo. I. c. 22.

*Pudet hæc opprobria nobis  
Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.*

Yet such is the System under which we have been living from Generation to Generation, and which will be transmitted to the latest Posterity, with all its growing and increasing Mischiefs, unless the apparent Necessity of a *Reformation* shall make us willing to receive and adopt the *only Means* of it—what those Means are, it is the Purpose of *this Book* to lay before the public Eye, and to recommend, in the most earnest and serious Manner, to *Legislative Interposition*; not as opposing one Human Scheme to another, but as restoring the *Divine Government* to its due Honour and Respect, and of course to its salutary Influence over the Manners and Actions of Mankind.

CON.



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## ERRATA.

- Page 51. l. 6. note, for *uneta* read *unfa*.  
 194. l. the last, note, *dele* specifically.  
 195. l. 3. note, for *gravitant*, read *gravant*.  
 134. for *1 Kings* *xix.* read *xviii.*  
 142. l. 5. for *Fer.* *iv.* 44. read *xliv.* 4.  
 154. l. 23. for *1 Cor.* *vii.* read *vi.*  
 225. the last note, last line but one, for *must*  
     *be*, read *seems to be*.  
 270. l. 17. for *Gen.* *iii.* 7. read *Gen.* *iii.* 6.  
 360. l. 21. for *it can*, read *it must*.  
 394. l. 11. for *Gronovius* read *Barbeyrac*.

## CHAPTER II.

## CHAPTER III.

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DEDICATION

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TO THE  
PRESIDENTS,  
VICE-PRESIDENTS,  
AND OTHER  
GOVERNORS  
Of those well-intended Charities, and benefi-  
cent Institutions

The *Asylum—Misericordia—Mag-  
dalene—and Lock-Hospital.*

THE AUTHOR of the following  
Treatise cannot fix on a more pro-  
per patronage for a work of this kind,  
than that of those noble and honourable  
persons, whose compassion on the miseries  
of the *female sex*, has led them to insti-  
tute public charities for its preservation  
and relief.

As our laws are at present framed,  
women are exposed to *seduction, prostitu-  
tion, and ruin*, almost without controul;  
—they



—they seem to be looked upon as lawful prey to the lust, treachery, cruelty, and mean artifices of licentious and profligate men, who can seduce and then abandon them at their will.

That a want of good government among us in these respects, is one source of all those evils, which your disinterested and humane endeavours are intended to prevent or remedy, is surely apparent on the slightest consideration.

A system of laws which leaves the horrid crime of *adultery* not only out of the list of its *capital punishments*, but even exempts it, as a *public* offence, from any animadversion whatsoever in our courts of criminal judicature, must be attended with all those mischiefs that arise from the encouragement which impunity affords to vice.

The same may also be observed, with respect to the defenceless state, in which the *weaker sex* in general is left against the *stronger*; so that any man may seduce,  
 3 and

## D E D I C A T I O N. ix

and abandon at his pleasure, the unhappy and deluded objects of his brutal appetite.

To exhibit a system far different from this—to set forth the *divine law* as the contrivance of *infinite wisdom*, for the security, peace, preservation, and protection of the *female sex*, is the purpose of the following pages.—Were this to be made the basis of our *municipal laws*, it would prove an adequate remedy for all those mischiefs, which, in comparatively few instances, can now only find a partial palliation, from benevolence like yours, but which must, in general, be still the portion of those, whom God's law was formed to protect.

Many of you, my LORDS and GENTLEMEN, are members of the LEGISLATURE; and if, from what shall be said on the matters treated in this book, they should become the subjects of your serious consideration in your *legislative capacity*, the author will gain one desirable end of his labours.

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This surely must be allowed—that, in point of fact, the alarming increase of *female prostitution* and *ruin*, calls loudly for some remedy: the *self-evidence* of this, is the very foundation of those benevolent designs, which distinguish the several public charities to which you so generously contribute.

Let Government adopt the *system* of heavenly wisdom, which adorns the pages of the SACRED VOLUME, and it will find a remedy in its own hands—what that *system* is, it has been the author's most serious endeavour to enquire, and to recommend it to all, but more especially to the consideration of those, whose care, expence, and vigilance, for the good of their fellow-creatures, has occasioned them the trouble of this address from

Their most humble servant,

And ardent well-wisher to their good designs,

THE AUTHOR.



## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE subjects of the following treatise, being of the utmost importance, have been considered with the most serious attention, and are laid before the reader on the highest authority, that is to say, on the authority of the *holy scriptures*.

Nothing less than this ought, or can, determine on the points herein treated, because they concern, not only the *present*, but *future* welfare of mankind: these, as taken in connection together, must depend, first, on *knowing*, and then on *doing* the will of God. What His *will* is, can only be known from the several revelations, or discoveries, which it hath graciously pleased Him to make of it, *by men, who spake not of themselves, but as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* 2 Pet. i. 21.

To imagine that, without such revelation, mortals can understand, or know the mind and will of God, is an absurdity, even greater than to suppose we can know the thoughts of each other, without any declaration of them either by words or actions. But to admit the necessity of a divine revelation, to receive the scriptures as *that* revelation, and not to make them the only infallible *rule* and *guide*, in all matters which relate to the mind and will of God therein revealed, is, so far, to lay aside the revelation of God, to make it *void and of none effect*, and to place ourselves in no better situation, than if no such discovery of the mind and will of God had ever been vouchsafed us.

Thus we rob God of His honour, by slighting His *word*, and thus are people led to set up the determinations of human wisdom against it, and expose themselves to *be carried about with every wind of doctrine*, which the folly and superstition of *weak* men, and the wickedness and craft of *designing* men, may happen to invent.

By such means it has been, that so many errors of various kinds have found their way, in all ages, into the *church*, and have maintained their empire over the minds of men. Long *usage* has made them venerable.—The prescriptive power of *custom* has given them establishment—and  
*both*

*both* these have prevailed on *human legislatures*, to afford them the awful obligation of their most solemn sanctions.

It cannot want many arguments to prove, that sundry *practices*, as well as *opinions*, which are found among the *heathen* nations, are abhorrent from all our conceptions of propriety, decency, and even humanity itself\*.—All these have but one source—*They do err, not knowing the scriptures.*

Where *revelation* is received, yet if it be not adhered to as the *only* rule of *faith* and *manners*, and this unreservedly, the opinions and practices of men will be as wide from the mind and will of God, as those of the *Heathen* are. I might here instance in the opinions and practices of the *Pharisees* of old, as well as of many nations called *Christian*, in more modern days, and who are members of that so-

\* I cannot forbear mentioning here that valuable, learned, and excellent work of *John Leland, D. D.* on the *Advantage and Necessity* of the *Christian Revelation*—wherein that author hath, with a strength of judgment, and depth of learning and erudition peculiar to himself, so proved his point, as to deserve the thanks of all who know how to set a just value on the scriptures, as well as of those who would wish to do it. This valuable author says, “It is the  
“mighty advantage of a *written revelation*, that by  
“an impartial consulting it, the deviations from it  
“may be detected, and things may again be reduced  
“to the original standard.” Vol. i. p. 453.



ciety of professing *Christians* which insolently and exclusively styles itself—"THE  
 "HOLY APOSTOLICAL and CATHOLIC  
 "CHURCH"—amongst whom the most devout are worshipping a wooden god, which they call a *crucifix*\*, and a *bredden* god, which they call the *host*; and, besides these, they worship *saints* and *angels*, and many such like things they do. The foundation of all which is still one and the same—*They do err, not knowing the scriptures*; for though the *Papists* have the scriptures, yet they do not adopt them as the only rule of *faith* and *worship*. Their *fear towards God* is taught them by the *doctrines and commandments of men* †, II. xxix. 13. which take place of the mind

\* This invention of the crucifix, or image of Christ on the cross, is but old heathenism new vamped. *Maximus Tyrius*, a Platonic philosopher, who was master to *M. Antoninus*, says—"The divine nature stands not in need of images or statues; but the nature and condition of man being very weak, and as far distant from the Divinity as heaven is from earth, framed these signs for itself, and attributed to them the names and titles of the gods"—and he thinks that the legislators acted wisely in contriving images for the people. See *Leland*, vol. i. p. 338. The wise men and *philosophers* pleaded for images as necessary helps to human infirmity. *Ib.* 424.

† Two of the articles in the famous creed of Pope Pius IV. are as follows:

XIII. I most firmly admit and embrace *apostolical* and *ecclesiastical* traditions, and all other observations

mind and will of God, as revealed in His holy word.

Happy would it be, could *we*, reformed *Protestants*, clear ourselves of this charge in all respects!

To prove that we cannot, in some points of the utmost consequence, is the purpose of the following pages; which, while the *reader* peruses, I could wish him to weigh in the *balance of the sanctuary*, to

variations and constitutions of the one *catholic and apostolic church*.

XIV. I do admit the holy scriptures in the *same sense* that *holy Mother Church* doth, whose business it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of them, and I will interpret them according to the unanimous consent of the *fathers*.

The *Papish canon law* frequently affirms—that *the church is above the scriptures*.

*Omnis quæ nunc apud nos est scripturæ autoritas ab ecclesiæ autoritate necessario dependet.*—"All the authority which we attribute to the scriptures, necessarily depends on the authority of the church." *Pighius de Hierar. Eccl. Lib. i. c. 2. Eccius*, in his *Enchiridion de Autoritate Ecclesiæ*, maintains—*Ecclesiam esse scripturis antiquiorem, & scripturam non esse authenticam, nisi ecclesiæ autoritate.*—"The church is more antient than the scriptures, and the scriptures are not authentic, save by the authority of the church."

*Hermannus* goes farther, and affirms—*Scripturas tantum valere quantum valent Æsopi fabulæ, nisi accederet ecclesiæ testimonium.*—"The scriptures are no more to be valued than *Æsop's Fables*, unless it were for the testimony of the church." See *Hist. of Popery*, vol. i. p. 214.

lay his *Bible* before him, and to call every argument, observation, and doctrine, to the strictest and most severe account, before that unerring tribunal. If he shall find any thing that is *wrong*, or detect any thing that is *false*, let him freely set it down to the *Author's* account. But whatever he shall find agreeable *to*, or clearly proved *by*, the *word* of God, let him not listen to the lying testimony of *prejudice* or *vulgar error* against it, but treasure it up in his mind, for the direction of his own *judgment* and *conscience*, in all situations and conditions of life.

If the *judgment* be mis-led or mis-informed, the more conscientious a man is, the farther will he be led into error, and the more firmly will he be attached to it; therefore it is well for us to listen to the counsel of the *wise man*—Prov. iv. 7. “WISDOM is the principal thing, therefore get WISDOM; and with all thy getting get UNDERSTANDING.”

As to differences, or even *errors*, (if *mistakes* about indifferent matters can be *so* called) where mere outward *forms* are concerned, and those of human invention, the *Author* desires *to think*, and *to let think*, and wheresoever the scriptures are *silent*, to be so too. He does not esteem it worth his while to expend a single drop of ink in such controversies. He does not suppose



# P R E F A C E. xvii

pose, that, had he lived in the second century, when the *Roman* and *Asiatic* Christians quarrelled about the keeping of *Easter*, and ran to such indecent lengths of animosity and discord, as might make the very *heathen* blush, that he would have ventured a single scratch of his finger, to have had it decided whether it was to be held "on the fourteenth day after the first moon in the new year," or "on the same stated day in every year," or "on the first *Sunday* after the first full moon." All this rout was made to very little purpose: and had the *Author* been weak enough to have entered into the dispute, had he sided with the *Asiatics*, and been excommunicated by Pope *Victor* for his pains, it would not, according to his present notions, have given him a moment's uneasiness.

But where the peace and well-being (I had almost said the very *being*) of society are concerned, where disorders, of the most malignant kind, have infected the general mass, to the destruction of millions down to this moment, and threaten the destruction of millions yet unborn, and those chiefly from among the most defenceless part of the human species; when the lust, treachery, cruelty, and villainy of men, are let loose to ravage, as they can, on the weakness and credulity

lity of helpless women; and when all this is apparently the effect of abolishing those parts of the *divine law*, which were evidently made to prevent it, and the introduction of a *system of human invention* is the means of its daily increase; too much cannot be said to point out the cause of the *disease*, and to lead to the *remedy*. The *former* is from the substitution of the *wisdom of man*, in the place of the *wisdom of God*; the *latter* can only be discovered and rendered effectual, by restoring the *wisdom of God* to its due place in our esteem, and by making it, as it is found revealed to us in the scriptures, the *basis* of our *municipal laws*—the *line* of our conduct—the *rule* of our *obedience*.

Perhaps some may think, that there are *points* handled and discussed in this *book*, which had better been left under the clouds of obscurity which have long overwhelmed them, and hidden them from vulgar observation, lest disputes should be raised, and abuses committed by the perversions of the evil and licentious. It is written concerning the scriptures themselves, that, to some they are the *savour of life unto life*\*, and unto others the *sa-*

\* Haurit lethiferum bufo de flore venenum,  
Quo mel nectareum sedula promit apes.

At the same flow'r the toad and bee may meet,  
That suck the poison—this exhausts the sweet.

*vour of death unto death.* 2 Cor. ii. 16. And again—that the *unlearned and unstable wrested the epistles of Paul, as also the other scriptures, to their own destruction.* 2 Pet. iii. 16. As therefore there is nothing in this book, which is not to be found in those scriptures, as to the *points* above hinted at, the Author ventures it forth, confiding in him who hath said—*As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it.* Is. lv. 10, 11.

He cannot be of the mind of *Synefius the Platonist*, who was raised to be a *Bishop* in the *Christian church*, but continued to be a determined *Platonist*; and had so far imbibed the spirit and doctrine of that school, as to declare his sentiments thus—“As  
“darkness is most proper and commodi-  
“ous for those who have weak eyes, so I  
“hold that *lies* and *fictions* are useful to  
“the people, and that *truth* would be  
“hurtful to those who are not able to  
“bear its light and splendor.” And he

“adds—



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adds—"If the laws of the church would  
 "dispense with it, that he would *philoso-*  
 "phize at home, and talk abroad in the  
 "common strain, preaching up the ge-  
 "neral and received *fables*." See note z,  
 Leland, vol. ii. p. 344.

Such is human prudence and wisdom!—  
 but the *divine wisdom* saith—*He that bath*  
*my word, let him speak my word faithfully.*  
 Jer. xxiii. 28. *There is nothing covered*  
*that shall not be revealed; and hid, that*  
*shall not be known. What I tell you in dark-*  
*ness, that speak ye in the light; and what ye*  
*hear in the ear, that preach* (*κηρύξατε*, pro-  
 claim, publish) *upon the house-tops.* Matth.  
 x. 26, 27. *Truth is like him that doeth*  
*the truth—it cometh to the light, that its*  
*deeds may be manifest, that they are wrought*  
*in God. Error, like every one that doth*  
*evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the*  
*light, lest its deeds should be reprov'd.* John  
 iii. 20. 21.

God never revealed any thing but that  
 it should be known. When men want to  
 conceal any part of divine revelation from  
 the knowledge of others, it is too fre-  
 quently with a purpose of preventing the  
 detection of some errors in *human systems*,  
 which, from some sinister view or other,  
 they dread the discovery of. Thus the  
 church of Rome, jealous of the light of  
 scripture,

scripture, knowing that the whole dominion of *popes* and *priests* over the understandings and consciences of the laity is founded in ignorance, keep, as far as they can, the scriptures out of their hands.

Others there are, who, from well-meant, but mistaken, zeal, for principles which they have been taught to *venerate*, dread that these should be attacked; as thinking the cause of *religion itself*, is involved with the *supposed truth* of what they are accustomed to believe. There can be no doubt, that when our *reformers* first attacked the POPE's *supremacy*, the worship of the *Virgin Mary*, the *celibacy of priests*, and other pious lyes and forgeries of the *church of Rome*, many devout and zealous people thought, that *religion itself* was, like *the ark* of old, 1 Sam. iv. 10, 11. about to be delivered into the hands of the *Philistines*; and cried out, like *Micah*, when the *Danites* took away his *Levite* and his *Teraphim*—*Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest—and what have I more?* See *Judges* xviii. 24.

If there be any thing in the *Bible* which ought to be *concealed*, it would be no very hard matter to prove, that it ought never to have been *revealed*. But as it often happens with private individuals, that they are afraid of looking too narrowly

rowly into the scripture, for fear of meeting with something to shake their preconceived opinions and prejudices; so is it with all public and *national systems*. As these have been fashioned by *human contrivance*, they are not, for very obvious reasons, over-fond of too narrow a scrutiny on the single footing of *divine revelation*; lest, as they are formed like the *feet of the image* in *Nebuchadnezzar's dream*, which were *part of iron, and part of clay*; so these being composed of the *heterogeneous mixture of divine wisdom and human contrivance*, a too curious investigator should, like the *STONE* there mentioned—*fall upon them, and break them to pieces*.

The Author of the following sheets professes himself a *Free-thinker*; not in the usual sense of that word, as what he has written must abundantly testify, but as an assertor of that right, which every reasonable creature is invested with, to *search, think, and judge* for himself. He therefore has endeavoured to lay some points, which he cannot but esteem of the utmost consequence, before the world, that others may exercise *their* privilege as the Author hath done *his*.

As for the *abuse* which any subject herein treated may be liable to—What is not *abused*? What in nature, providence,  
or



or revelation, has not been *abused* and perverted to some vile purpose or other? The very GOSPEL OF PEACE hath been *abused*, to sanctify fraud, violence, oppression, and persecution—to justify massacres, tortures, murders, even to men's *roasting alive* their fellow-creatures, and *thinking they did God service!* infomuch that, were we to judge of the great HEAD of our *holy religion*, by the *abuse* which has been made of His authority, we should invert what He says, *Luke ix. 56.* and imagine, that He came *not to SAVE men's lives, but to DESTROY them.* But what does all this prove? Nothing but the ignorance, perverseness, cruelty, and wickedness of human nature; and that *corruptio optimi fit pessima*: but it does not prove, that the God of heaven, who foresaw and foreknew such *abuses*, should not have revealed His *mind* and *will* to mortals; nor that any part of that revelation should be concealed, suppressed, or hidden from the eyes of men, for fear of its being *abused*. For this may be taken as a certain rule, that no *abuse* of the scriptures ever yet happened from a real understanding and knowledge of their contents, but from an ignorance, either in ourselves, or imposed on us by the design and artifice of others.

The grand question to be tried is, whether a SYSTEM, filled with *obligation* and  
*responsibility*

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*responsibility* of men to women, and of women to men, even unto *death* itself, and this established by INFINITE WISDOM, is not better calculated to prevent the ruin of the *female sex*, with all its horrid consequences, both to the public and individuals, than a SYSTEM of *human contrivance*, where neither *obligation* nor *responsibility* are to be found, either of men to women, or of women to men, in instances of the most important concern to *both*, but more especially to the *weaker sex*?

The whole of the evidence on both sides is faithfully collected, and laid open, without any reserve or disguise, in this book—let every READER look upon himself as impannelled on the *jury*—let him impartially hearken to the *cause*—and a true *verdict* give according to the *evidence*.

THE LYP-

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# THE LYPHORA.

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## INTRODUCTION.

TO call in question the truth of long-received *opinions*, is a sort of employment which *few* chuse to be engaged in; not only from the natural indolence and supineness of the human mind, but from the reception which such attempts are likely to meet with from the *generality*, who are always jealous of whatsoever may seem an attack on *principles* which have the sanction of *antient custom*; and from thence, even of *laws* themselves, for their support.

We need but look \* back to the times of

\* If we carry our researches into the history of the Heathen world, we shall find that it was an established maxim adopted by *Plato*, and in which all the other *philosophers* without exception concurred, that "every nation should worship the gods according to the established laws and customs, to which also every private person in his own practice ought to conform." By this artifice of the *devil* (who is emphatically styled the *god of this world*, that blinds

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the



of the *Reformation*, in order to see this abundantly verified. Our *Reformers* no sooner began the salutary work of enquiry after *truth*, and its infallible consequence, the detection of error, than the whole *Christian world*, so called, was in arms against them. *Councils* were summoned, *synods* held, and their sentences were, in substance, what that of the "*men, brethren, and fathers,*" of the *Jews* was against that supposed *innovator*, *Paul of Tarsus*, when they said, "*Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live.*" Acts xxii. 22.

Had not *Luther* quarrelled with *Pope Leo X.* and brought himself into dif-

the minds of men," 2 Cor. iv. 4.) not only the *Heathen world*, but a great part of the *Christian world*, hath been enslaved in chains of error and delusion. On the footing of this maxim it was, that when *Socrates*, who was the wisest of the *philosophers*, attempted to awaken his countrymen to a more rational and spiritual sense of *divine things* than they had been accustomed to, he was accused at *Athens* by *Anytus* and *Melitus*, that "he did not believe those to be gods which the city believed, and that he introduced other new gods" — for this he was put to death. How many *Christians* have been put to death on a similar principle, let the annals of those declare who are now crying, *How long, O LORD, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth!* Rev. vi. 9, 10.

So *Cicero* binds it as a duty upon the people "to follow the religion of their ancestors." Cic. de Leg. lib. ii. c. 8. — *ritus familiæ patrumque servanto.*

ficult

fitult and dangerous circumstances, it is not impossible, but that the light of that great *reformer* had remained hidden under the \* *busbel* of *monkery*. However, it pleased God to order it otherwise, and, in his gracious providence, to over-rule *Luther's* situation, for the investigation and promulgation of the *faith once delivered to the saints*. Jude 3. This extraordinary man was led to search, think, and judge for himself; and (drawing his *artillery* from the inexhaustible *arsenal* of the *holy scriptures*) first to † attack, and then to overthrow, *errors*, which had been received as the most sacred *truths* for ages, and which had been maintained, by every support, which the credulity and superstition of mankind, aided by laws and powers *ecclesiastical* and *civil*, could give them.

From whence I would infer, that no *opinions* or doctrines whatsoever, receive any *conclusive* proof of their truth, from the

\* Matth. v. 15.

† I would observe, that *John Wickliffe*, an *Englishman*, educated at *Oxford* in the reign of Edward III. has the honour of being the first person in *Europe* who publickly called in question, and boldly refuted, those doctrines, which had passed for *certain* during so many ages. Guth. Gram. vol. i. 247. For this he was sorely persecuted during his life; and after his death, his bones, which had been buried forty-one years, were dug up and burned. This by a solemn decree of the council of *Constance*. See Fox's *Martyrs*, vol. i. 529.

suffrages of men, however wise, learned, or however supported by human *maxims*, *customs*, or *laws*. To take it for granted, that truth must be where there are these supports, is at once to give up our privilege of enquiring and judging for ourselves; and, if so, we might as well have been born without *reason* and *judgment* as with them. Upon such a principle as this, a *Mohammedan* has as good \* a reason for the truth of the *Koran*, as we have for the truth of the *Bible*; for the *former* hath as much the *customs* and *laws* of *Turkey* for its support, as the *latter* has those of *England*.  
 “ *Idolatry* at *Pekin* (says a late writer)  
 “ *Mohammedism* at *Constantinople*, *Popery* at  
 “ *Rome*, and *orthodoxy* at *Westminster*, will  
 “ be all equally right. The earth will  
 “ turn round in *England*, and stand still

\* So had the antient *Heathen* for the truth of their systems. Many of the *philosophers* actually resolve all *moral* obligations into merely *human laws* and *constitutions*; making them the *only* measure of right and wrong, good and evil: so that if the people had a mind to be instructed what they should do or forbear, they sent them to the laws of their several countries, and allowed them to do whatsoever was not forbidden by those laws. *Leland*, vol. ii. 81, 82. *Plato* is for people's “ worshipping the gods appointed by the laws “ of the state, and in the manner there prescribed.”  
 Ib. p. 119. note p. So before him *Pythagoras*,

Ἀθάνατος μὲν πρῶτα θεὸς νόμῳ ὧς διακεῖται.  
 Σίσυ.—

First the immortal gods, as is by law ordain'd,  
 Worship.



“ in *Italy*; and our holy religion will be  
 “ true in *Europe*, but an arrant falsehood  
 “ throughout all the continent of *Asia*.”  
*Humanum est errare*, is too true respecting  
 every man and *all* men, as fallible crea-  
 tures. *Churches* and *councils*, as well as other  
 communities \*, are therefore liable to be  
 mistaken, as is modestly confessed by the  
 Church of *England* in her 21st article, “ Of  
 “ General Councils.”

“ When they be gathered together (for-  
 “ asmuch as they be an assembly of men  
 “ whereof all be not governed by the  
 “ Spirit and word of God) they may *err*,  
 “ and sometimes *have erred* in things per-  
 “ taining to God. Wherefore things or-  
 “ dained by them as necessary to salvation,  
 “ have neither strength nor authority,  
 “ unless it may be declared that they are  
 “ taken out of the Holy Scriptures.”

\* “ By paying little deference to *general councils*,  
 “ few inconveniences arise, compared with those  
 “ which inevitably follow a blind and tame submis-  
 “ sion, in points of faith, to human decisions, and to  
 “ *public wisdom*, as some of our controversial doctors  
 “ have loved to call it, which may be *public folly*.”

“ *Public wisdom* is a mere *Proteus*; and, not to con-  
 “ sider it in *Pagan* or *Mahometan* countries, amongst  
 “ the *Jews* it once was the *wisdom* of *Ahab* and *Jeze-  
 “ bel*, and afterwards of *Annas* and *Caiaphas*. It sets  
 “ out with a great shew of religion, it begins with  
 “ the *Gospel according to St. Matthew*, and it often  
 “ ends in the *gospel according to Mr. Hobbes*.” Jortin  
 Rem. vol. ii. p. 193—4.

The writer of the following pages would humbly hope, that, having so venerable an authority for calling in question the truth of certain matters, which are most *assuredly believed amongst us*, he shall not be deemed impertinently contentious, if, touching some points, he differs from the generality of his countrymen, who, contenting themselves with *notions* and opinions *received by tradition from their fathers*, have never thought of looking after the foundations on which they are grounded, and have therefore mistaken the *fallible* authority of men like themselves, for the divine and *infallible* authority of *truth itself*.

That our *brothels* are filled with *harlots*, our streets with *prostitutes*, and our land with *impurity*, is too dreadfully true. *Magdalens*, *Asylums*, and all the kind and benevolent interpositions of public charities, however we may suppose them, with respect to some few individuals, to answer their benevolent designs, are inadequate to the cure of so crying an evil. A tree is not to be destroyed by plucking off a few leaves, or by cutting away here and there a branch; nor can so general an evil, as we have spoken of, be reformed by so partial, so precarious a remedy, as, from the nature of things, it is in the power of  
of

of the best disposed, as matters are now constituted amongst us, to administer.

The *ax must be laid to the root*—this is the divine wisdom. The truth is, that the evil above mentioned, as all others, arises from the neglect and contempt of the divine law, and the substitution of human \* laws in its stead. The wisdom and goodness of God, which He has shewn in the provision graciously made for the protection and defence of the *weaker* sex, from the villainy, treachery, and cruelty of the *stronger*, are disregarded. God's laws are laid aside, for that system of baseness and barbarity, which permits men, with impunity, first to *seduce*, and then to betray, to infamy, want, misery, disease, and even death itself in many instances, thousands and tens of thousands of unhappy women, who (were the laws of Heaven regarded, as they ought to be, and made the foundation of our *municipal* laws) instead of becoming nuisances, and reduced to the

\* This *practice* exactly harmonizes with the *principles* of Lord Bolingbroke, who concludes a very horrid sentiment on the *commerce* of men and women, with these words :—" *Increase and multiply* is the law " of nature. The manner in which this shall be " executed, with the greatest advantage to society, is " the *law* of man." Here this matter is left wholly to political considerations and human laws, without any *divine law* to restrain or regulate it.



state of *Devils* \* incarnate, might have been the comforts of their families, the delight of their friends, the ornaments of civil society.

As to what shall be advanced on these, and on the other subjects of the following discourse, the *author* is not wild enough to imagine that, what he has to say, will meet with any better reception than *that book* does from whence he takes his authority; or that any person who does not regard the *Bible* so far as to pay an implicit regard to its sacred dictates, will be in the least persuaded by what will be offered: much less that there will be any alteration in our *national* system of laws, 'till, as a nation, we practically adopt, as we certainly profess to believe, and as it is evidently *true*, that God is to make laws for man;

\* This expression will not be thought too strong, when the appendages, and concomitant-vices of *prostitution* are considered; such as *profane cursing* and *swearing*—*blasphemy*—*obscene talking*—*drunkenness*—*lying*—*thieving*—and even the *unnatural crime* mentioned Rom. i. 26. This is so *frequent*, as even to have become *common*. When such are the gradual consequences of eradicating every principle of *modesty* and *virtue* from the *female* mind, how ought that *law* to be revered, which was ordained of Heaven for their protection! *Montesquieu*, *L'esprit des Loix*, vol. i. Liv. 16. c. 12. observes, that “there are so many evils attending the loss of virtue in a woman, the whole soul is so degraded by it, and so many other faults follow upon it, that, in a popular state, *public incontinence* may be regarded as the greatest of misfortunes.”

and

and not man for God ; or, in other words, that the *world* is to conform to the *Bible*, and not the *Bible* to the *world*.

It is now long since Christ charged the *Jewish Rabbis* with *making void the law of God through their traditions, and teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*, hereby proving themselves the children and followers of those of whom he complains *Is. xxix. 13.* *This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men.* Human nature is \* just the same now that it was then, and the same leaven has run through human systems, more or less, to this hour.

Our laws concerning *marriage*, especially since the famous *marriage-act*, are full of this, and hence in part arises the mischief complained of. By substituting a human ceremony of *man's invention*, in the place of the *only ordinance of marriage*

\* “ August 1, 1543. The *Parisian* divines assembling the people by the sound of a trumpet, published five-and-twenty heads of *Christian doctrine*, proposing the bare conclusions, and determinations, without adding reasons, persuasions, or grounds, but only prescribing, as it were by authority, *what they would have believed*. These were printed, and sent through all *France*, confirmed by the *King's* letters, under most grievous punishments against whomsoever spake or taught otherwise.” *Brent. Hist. Coun. Trent.* 105.

which

which God ever instituted or revealed, we have reduced the most solemn of all ties to a sort of *civil institution*, the most sacred of all obligations to a mere *civil contract*; and where the *latter* can be avoided, the *former* is as *totally* vacated, as if it had never been.

By God's express command from *Mount Sinai*, where the laws concerning *moral* good and evil, were eternally and unalterably fixed, no man could *take* a *virgin* and then *abandon* her. *He shall surely endow her to be his wife.* Exod. xxii. 16. And again Deut. xxii. 29. *She shall be his wife; BECAUSE HE HAS HUMBLLED HER, he may not put her away all his days.*

Will any say—"these laws are antiquated?" I answer, "they are as unchangeable as the God that made them." His *law* is His *will*, and therefore can no more *change* than Himself. *The strength of ISRAEL is not a man that He should repent* וְנִחַם change his *mind*, *opinion*, or *purpose*. 1 Sam. xv. 29. *I am JEHOVAH, I change not*, is the character which he records of himself, Mal. iii. 6.; and to shew that he hath stamped the same *unchangeableness* upon his *laws*, he says, Deut. iv. 2. *Ye shall not ADD unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye DIMINISH ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God.* And again, Deut. xii. 32. *What thing soever*



*soever I command you, observe to do it, thou shalt not ADD thereto nor DIMINISH from it.*

Now, I do take it for granted, that He, who, speaking to the people of *Israel*, calls himself THE LORD YOUR GOD, is also THE LORD OUR GOD. *Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes—of the Gentiles also.* Rom. iii. 29. For which very evident reason, I do conclude, that both *Jews* and *Gentiles* are equally subject to those laws which the LORD THEIR GOD once revealed and established for the *moral* government of the world: and therefore (as we may learn from the testimony of the *Apostle* of the *Gentiles* under the New Testament, Gal. iii. 10. as well as from *Moses* under the Old Testament, Deut. xxvii. 26.) *Cursed is every one, that continueth not in ALL things which are written in the BOOK OF THE LAW, to do them.*

These laws therefore stand on the same footing with what we usually call the *Ten Commandments*—and are no more subject to *decay* or *alteration* than *they* are. I say they stand on the same footing, because they were equally delivered by GOD to *Moses*, on the same divine *veracity*, the same awful, and indisputable *authority*, and are guarded by the same tremendous *sanction*.

That the merely *ceremonial* laws are *waxed old* and *vanished away*, Heb. viii. 13. is certain, because they were only established

blished for the *time then present*, Heb. ix. 9. to point out, and prefigure *things to come*. They had their end and accomplishment in CHRIST, and of course their utter abolition. This, so far from arguing any *change* of mind or will in GOD, is one of the highest and most illustrious proofs of the uniformity, and consistency, with which he has laid down, carried on, and perfected the same one design from the beginning.

But the *moral* laws which respect the well-being of society, the prevention of disorder, confusion, and all other appendages of *moral evil*, must endure, as long as the objects to which they relate endure on the face of the earth. When *St. Paul*, Gal. iii. 10. and Rom. x. 5. cites the sanctions of the *moral* law from the Old Testament, he shews very clearly, that it still remains as an invariable rule of conduct, from which all the people of GOD, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, are equally forbidden to depart.

Can any person therefore, in his sober senses, imagine that it was *unlawful* in the sight of GOD (because expressly by a *positive* law forbidden) *three thousand* years ago, to take a virgin and then abandon her, but that now it is *lawful*? or, because there is no law of this land against it, it is therefore less offensive in the eyes of GOD, than  
at

at the instant He forbid it? or that God's law is only binding on the consciences of men, where it has the sanction of human \* institutions to enforce it? If it be *time* which wears out the malignity of such an evil, or the obligation of the divine law against it, we may as well imagine that other crimes stand in the same predicament, and the most atrocious violations of the security and happiness of mankind, will have a *prescriptive* innocence to plead in their excuse.

That all such reasonings are not only without foundation, but directly opposite to the *divine truth*, we learn from that *truth itself*, which hath assured us, that "*it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.*" And that we may be assured He stamped the most permanent authority on that law, and particularly on that part of the law of which we have now been speaking, He adds, in the very next words—" *Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, com-*

\* We may say of human laws, ceremonies, and institutions, which interfere with the obligation of God's ordinances or commandments, as *Henry II.* King of *France* said of the *papal* dispensations, that—" they are not able to secure the conscience, and are " nothing but a shadow cast before the eyes of men, " which cannot hide the truth from God."



*mitteth adultery.*" This is no *new* law enacted by our blessed *Saviour* on the subject, but an application and explanation of that very law which he had, immediately before, said — " could never fail," and which was given to *Moses* at mount *Sinai*. See *Luke* xvi. 17, 18.

When our Lord in his sermon on the mount, as recorded by *St. Matthew*, is about to explain the *moral* law, and vindicate it from the false glosses which the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* had put upon it, he prefaces his explanation with these remarkable words—" *Verily I say unto you, 'till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle (one, even the most seemingly inconsiderable part of a single letter) shall in no wise pass from the law, 'till all be fulfilled.*" *ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται. Until all things be done.* Which, with the learned *Dr. Hammond* on *Matth.* v. 18. I would thus paraphrase:  
 " 'Till the world be destroyed, and all  
 " things come to an end, no one least  
 " particle shall depart from the law, or  
 " be taken away, or lose its force and  
 " obligation." "*Whosoever therefore, saith Christ, ver. 19. shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*" After such a testimony as this to the *immutability* of the divine law, it would hardly

hardly be decent in me to attempt an addition to its force, by any further arguments.

I will therefore now proceed to examine the subjects proposed, which I shall do singly on the authority of God's word; and this, not by detaching one text here and there from the rest of the sacred scriptures; but by examining carefully the *whole* throughout, *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*, 1 Cor. ii. 13. and thus allowing the word of God to be, what God doubtless intended it should be, the *best comment upon itself*.

Nor shall I venture to rest any one point on the authority of even the best \* *translations*, but constantly have recourse to the *original scriptures*, being desirous to follow that sensible maxim, that "nothing should be received in proof, but on the best testimony which the nature of the thing will admit of." If, in matters of *civil* property, "a copy will not be admitted in evidence, where the original can be come at," how much more doth it behove us, in matters of *eternal concern*, to have the best evidence for our determina-

\* Whosoever reads the strictures *on*, or rather *against*, the sacred scriptures, of that ignorant and malicious reviler of them, *M. de Voltaire*, may see how he has been led into his mistakes by some of the *Latin* and *French* translations.

tions? *Satius est petere fontes quam sectari rivulos.*

I have endeavoured to clear my imagination of all *worldly* systems, and *human inventions* whatsoever, whether *Popish* or *Protestant*, and to allow no authority more modern than the sacred scripture, *less* weighty than inspiration itself, to amount to a proof of what is *true* or *false*. As for the writings of primitive \* *fathers*, *Christians*, &c. the whole rabble of *schoolmen*, together with the decrees of *councils*, *churches*, *synods*, &c. a man, who wishes to know the *truth*, should no more receive a matter of *doctrine* on their authority, than

\* These were but *fallible men*, like ourselves, at best; and if we consider the strange opinions which are to be found in their writings, we must acknowledge them to be very faulty. Though they have been so mutilated, changed, interpolated, and corrupted, by the various *sects* who have wanted their testimony to speak for them, that it is difficult to know what is *genuine*, and what is not. I remember to have met with the following dismal, though short account, of the writings of the *fathers*—"Scatent erroribus tum *veterum* tum *recentiorum hæreticorum*." "They abound with the errors, as well of the old, as of the more modern *hæretics*." The *apostle*, Tit. i. 14. warns us against *Jewish fables*; we should be equally careful of *giving heed* to those which seem to bear a *Christian* stamp.

We might as well recommend a *young man* to the study of so many volumes of *news-papers* to make him an accurate *historiographer*, as to the study of the *fathers* to make him a sound *divine*.

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he should a matter of *fact* on the testimony of a *Popish* legend. Nay, I will go farther, and say, that the dying words, and unshaken constancy of *saints, martyrs, and confessors*, ought to prove no more than that “they themselves believed what they said,” unless the *holy scriptures* bear testimony to their opinions.

However clear the *spring* is; yet, when it divides itself, flowing from the fountain-head into different channels, it will naturally present to the *eye* the *colour*, and to the *palate* the *taste*, of the different soils through which it may happen to take its course. I have therefore found little encouragement to rest any thing on the authority of *commentators*; who, being prejudiced by education, influenced by custom, and misled by others that have gone before them.—instead of *thinking* as the *Bible speaks*, too frequently make the *Bible* speak as *they think*. The conclusion of the matter therefore ought to be—*To the LAW and to the TESTIMONY!* Is. viii. 20.

## C H A P. I.

## Of MARRIAGE as a Divine Institution.

**W**HEN the great and all-wise Creator had formed man upon the earth, male and female, He blessed them, and said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. Gen. i. 28. This command was to be fulfilled in a way of God's own appointment; that is to say, by the union of the man and woman in personal knowledge of each other. This is the only marriage-ordinance which we find revealed in the sacred scriptures. Wherever this union should come to pass, though two distinct and independent persons before, they now were to become as one. They shall be one \* flesh, Gen. ii. 24. and so indissolubly one,

\* **לֶבָשׁ אֶחָד**—as one flesh—**ἐν σαρκὶ ἑκῇ**, Gr. Test. The Hebrew **ל** prefixed, hath often this sense. See Josh. vii. 5. Lam. i. 17. So the Greek preposition **ἐν**, which answers to it. Compare 2 Sam. vii. 14. with Heb. i. 5. where the **לֶבָשׁ** and **אֶחָד** of the Old Testament, are rendered by **ἐν σαρκὶ ἑκῇ** and **ἐν ὕψει** in the New Testament; and clearly evince the names of Father and Son to be æconomical names of office in the covenant of redemption, not descriptive of an inferiority and subordination in the persons of the God-head. Compare Luke i. 35.

Also

one, as to be inseparable. *What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.* Matth. xix. 6.

That this *oneness* arose from this *act* of union, and from the command consequent upon it, that *they should be one flesh*, is evident from the *Apostle's* reasoning, 1 Cor. vi. 15, 16. *Know ye not that your bodies are the members of CHRIST? Shall I then take the members of CHRIST, and make them the members of an \* harlot? God forbid! What, know ye not that he that is JOINED to an harlot is ONE BODY? for two, saith he, shall be ONE FLESH.*

This question of the *Apostle's*—*Know ye not that he that is joined to an harlot is one body?* and what follows, being taken together, have a plain reference to what *Adam* said, Gen. ii. 23, 24. *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, &c.* and seems very fully to determine, not only the strictness

Also *הָיָה* with *ה*, and a noun following, denotes some change of condition, state, or quality, and signifies—to become. Gen. ii. 7. 24. xvii. 4. Exod. iv. 4. & al. freq.

\* *πορν*, from *πέρνω*, or *πέρνω*, to sell. A *whore*, a woman who prostitutes her body for gain. So the Latin *meretrix* is from *mereor*, to earn, get money: and our *English* word *whore*, from the German *huren* (Dutch *hueren*) to hire. Thus *Ovid*, lib. i. *éleg.* 10.

*Stat meretrix certo cuivis mercabilis ære,*

*Et miseras jussu corpore quærit opes.*

See *Parkhurst's Gr. Lex.*



of the *marriage-union*, but *that* which constitutes it in the sight of GOD. In all which there is not the least hint, or most distant allusion, to any *outward* rite or ceremony administered by any person whatsoever; but the whole is made to rest simply and only in the *personal* \* union of the *man* and *woman*. It is this *alone* which, according to the *Apostle*, makes them *one flesh*.

If the licentious and temporary union with an *harlot*, makes a man to become

\* It may be presumed, that in what *Adam* said, Gen. ii. 23. he had an immediate reference to her formation out of a *part of himself*; but that there was also an allusion to the *personal union* of the *male and female*, in what he says, ver. 24. is clearly proved by the *Apostle's* argument, 1 Cor. vi. 16; otherwise his citing this passage of Gen. ii. 24. would have been nothing to the purpose to shew that *this* makes them *one flesh*. The Hebrew בָּנָהּ בְּשָׁרָהּ is rendered by the LXX, ΠΡΟΣΚΟΛΛΗΘΗΣΕΤΑΙ, πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ. in Matt. xix. 5. ΠΡΟΣΚΟΛΛΗΘΗΣΕΤΑΙ τῇ γυναίκα αὐτοῦ. Let the reader compare all this with the *Apostle's* ὁ ΚΟΛΛΩΜΕΝΟΣ τῇ σάρτι, and it will be very easy to see that the same *idea* runs through the whole; which is, that those who are *thus joined*, are *one body*, and pronounced by GOD—*one flesh*. This will appear still the more evidently, if we consider our LORD's expression, as represented by the *Evangelist*, Matt. xix. 6. where he uses the word ΣΤΝΕΖΕΤΕΝ, hath joined, or yoked together, as the effect of the cause expressed by Προσκολληθήσεαι. All this will appear still more evidently, if, with the accurate *Ar. Mont.* we translate בָּנָהּ בְּשָׁרָהּ, *adharebit* IN UXORE SUA.

*one body, and one flesh* with her, we may suppose that the sin of *fornication* receives no small share of its malignity, from the abuse thereby committed of the *ordinance* of *marriage* as established by God: as entering into it without any intention of abiding by it, but merely to gratify a transient lust, and that with a woman who departs from one to another, as gain or evil desire may lead her. Nevertheless the *Apostle*, on the authority of Gen. ii. 23, 24. says, that *he that is joined to a harlot, is one body, and one flesh* with her, by being engaged in *that ordinance*, of which these things are declared, in the passage referred to, to be the inevitable consequences.

From what has been said, it appears, that *marriage*, as instituted of God, simply consists (as to the essence of it) in the union of the *man* and *woman* as *one body*; for which plain and evident reason, no outward forms or ceremonies of man's invention, can add to or diminish from the effects of *this union* in the sight of God. What ends these things may serve, as to civil purposes, I shall not dispute: but I cannot suppose that the *matrimonial-service* in our church, or any other, can make the parties more *one flesh* in the sight of God, supposing them to have been united, than the *burial-service* can make the corpse

over which it is red more dead than it was before.

Supposing they have not been united, they are not *one flesh* in the sight of God, by any virtue in the words of the service, any more than a piece of *wafer* becomes *flesh and blood* by a Popish priest's consecration. It is not *man*, but God, which makes the *twain one flesh*; neither is it *man's ordinance*, but God's *institution*, which brings that to pass. If this be not so, why, notwithstanding the words of the service, does incapacity, inability, or impotency, in either party, render all that has been done *null and void*? See Burn, Eccl. Law, vol. ii. p. 39.

By observing the *outward* ordinance, the intention of the parties is publicly recognized, and they are pronounced *man and wife* in the sight of the world; but they are not so in God's sight, unless by anticipation, as it were, with respect to the mutual promises made to each other, which the sacred scriptures call *betrothing* or *espousing*; but the contract is then, and only then, *complete* in the sight of God, when the only ordinance which He has appointed has passed between them; and therefore it is very properly styled—the *consummation*.

As to the person celebrating the marriage—the place where—the manner how;  
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it is very certain, that these things are wholly of human invention, and therefore not only various in different parts of the world, but also in the same country. We have amongst us *Jews, Papists, Quakers*; all these observe an outward form or ceremony different from each other. As for the church of *England*, we have differed from ourselves; for the same ceremony which would have constituted a *legal* marriage before the 26th of the late King George II. will not do it now, unless certain circumstances, introduced and insisted upon by act of parliament, be observed.

But the *all-wise Legislator of the universe* hath not left His divine institutions on so vague, so precarious, so uncertain a footing. *But see*, said He to *Moses*, *that thou make all things according to the pattern shewn thee in the mount.* Heb. viii. 5. We find every particular, down to the very pins in the tabernacle, every *rite* and *ceremony*, even to the minutest circumstance, exactly delineated and revealed. But we find no *marriage-service*, or religious *ceremony of an* \* *outward* kind, so much as mentioned.

\* As for the manner of celebrating marriage, *Moses* has left no direction about it. We do not find it accompanied with any religious ceremony, such as going to the Tabernacle or Temple, offering sacrifices, or even that it was performed by or before a *priest*. See *Ant. Univ. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 145.

The business of *marriage* was left as at first ordained, to the one simple *act* of union. A conclusive proof this, that nothing else is of *divine* institution; consequently, that nothing else is essential to constitute a marriage in the sight of God, but that *this* is.

Should the *Reader* retain the least doubt of the truth of what has been said, or be under any difficulty in understanding what is meant by those words—*They shall be one flesh*, we may refer to a very clear explanation of the matter, not only by reviewing *St. Paul's* words, 1 Cor. vi. 15, 16. but also by considering more minutely what is meant by those passages mentioned before, from the law of *Moses*; but as the *texts* are not cited at length, I will here set them down as they stand in the places referred to.

Exod. xxii. 16, 17.

*If a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.*

By this passage, as from many others in the sacred scriptures, it appears, that fathers, during the minority of their daughters, as in every other instance (see Numb. xxx. 3, 4, 5.) so in the business of contracting marriage, had a negative in their own

own power: therefore if a woman being in her father's house in her youth; i. e. being under age, as we term it, betrothed or espoused herself to a man, the former by \* *verba de futuro*, the latter by *verba de presenti*, as the civilians speak; both which were held so sacred, that defiling either a betrothed or espoused woman was a species of adultery, and to be punished with death:—yet if the father withheld his consent, neither the betrothing nor espousals, nor any contract arising from them, could be carried into execution. But in the passage before us, matters were gone too far to be recalled. The man had not only enticed the maid, but had actually lain with her; and therefore God commands that he shall SURELY endow her לו לאשה *sibi in uxorem*. Mont. for his wife. For now the primary institution took place, they shall be one flesh; and what God had joined together (by pronouncing them one flesh) man could not put asunder. Therefore the 17th verse doth not say—"If the father utterly refuse to

\* Spousals *de futuro* are a mutual promise, or covenant of marriage, to be had afterwards; as when the man saith to the woman—"I will take thee to my wife;" and she then answereth, "I will take thee to my husband."—Espousals *de presenti* are a mutual promise or contract of present matrimony; as when the man doth say to the woman—"I do take thee to my wife,"—and she then answereth—"I do take thee to my husband." 2 Burn 16.



give her unto him, such marriage shall be null and void; but—\* though the father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins. Which is but explanatory of what goes before, he shall surely endow her to be his wife, by paying מִדָּוָר the dower, into the hands of the father after the marriage, as he ought to have done, and was usually done, before-hand. מִדָּוָר is supposed to be a dowry or portion which the husband paid into the hands of the bride, or her father, as a kind of purchase of her person. This is, to this day, the practice of several † eastern nations; and this was not to be with-

\* So דָּן is often rendered, as in *Judg.* xiii. 16. *Isa.* x. 22. *Lam.* iii. 32. & al. freq.; and so it ought to be understood here, in order to make this verse consistent with the preceding, where it is said—יְמַדְּרֶנָּה, מִדָּוָר endowing he shall endow her, &c. as well as to avoid the very great difficulty of supposing that such an action as *enticing the maid, lying with her, and then leaving her* on the father's refusal, was of no higher consequence than paying a small sum of money; for the כֶּסֶף, or silver paid, amounted to very little, and rather seems to be payable as an acknowledgment of the contract, than any thing else. See *Nold. Heb. Part.* דָּן, N<sup>o</sup> 12. translated by *quavis—although*:—where the reader will find many authorities.

† See *Parkhurst's Heb. Lex.* sub voc מִדָּוָר.

*Tacitus* L. de Mor. Germ. mentions such a custom among the *Germans*. Dotem non uxor marito, sed uxori maritus offert, intersunt parentes & propinqui, ac munera probant: In hæc munera uxor accipitur,

withheld because the husband had married the woman either *without* or *against* the father's consent. In short, the man was not to take advantage of his own wrong. But, ~~ON~~ *though* the father refused or not, the dowry must be paid according to law.

Having seen what was to be done where a man *enticed a maid*, and took actual possession of her, *against* the father's consent; let us next see what was to be done when a man took a maid, without even the father's *knowledge*; not by a seduction or enticement, but on a sudden and unexpected interview, by meeting her without any previous intent.

Deut. xxii. 28, 29.

*If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold \* on her and*

accipitur, hoc maximum vinculum, hæc arcana sacra, hoc conjugales Deos arbitrantur. "The wife doth  
"not bring a dower to the husband, but the husband  
"to the wife; the parents and relations are present,  
"and approve the gifts. On these gifts the wife  
"is accepted; this is the chiefest bond: these are  
"sacred mysteries, with which they think the Gods  
"are married." This was called among the Romans—*coemptio nuptialis*, and was reciprocal, as well on the woman's side as on the man's. To this Virg. Georg. I. l. 31. seems to allude:

Teque sibi generum Tethys emat omnibus undis.

\* The word תפשה seems here to be rightly rendered by *lay hold on her*—*Prendra* Fr.—*take her*.—The Jewish doctors construe this into that sort of violence and

and lie with her, and they be found; the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; BECAUSE HE HATH HUMBLLED HER, he may not put her away all his days.

The word *shekels* is not in the original, but inserted by our translators; in the passage of Exod. xxii. 17. there is the same word כסף *silver*, or *silver-money*; there it is said in general, according to the dowry of virgins. Here it is said חמשים כסף *Quinquaginta argenteos, fifty pieces of silver-money*. By

and *constraint*, which we call a *rape*. But this is spoken of at ver. 25, where the word חזק is used; which is a much stronger expression than תפש to take, or lay hold on; and so our translators have (ver. 25.) observed, in their translating חזק by—*force her*. That this is the true idea of the word, may be seen by comparing 2 Sam. xiii. 11, 14. when Amnon commits a rape on Tamar. The word תפש does not necessarily signify violence, which חזק does. *Omnis significatio est vehementia, fortitudo. Calasio sub voc.* This place of Deut. xxii. 28. is rather to be understood of “defiling a maid, that being occasionally laid hold on, “did presently yield, not being solicited before-hand, “and drawn to it by degrees. But Exod. xxii. 16. “speaks of such as did entice a maid, with promise “of marriage, and then defiled her.” *Clark*. The two passages taken together shew, that in neither case shall the man abandon the virgin he hath taken. We must conclude there is a reason for using different words at ver. 25, and ver. 28, in the Hebrew text, though the LXX translate them both by βιασμεν—probably תפש is a more general word than חזק and includes all taking, whether by force or otherwise.

comparing



comparing the two passages, we may therefore look upon this as the assessment of the usual *dowry of virgins* paid to the father. It was to be paid in *this* case as well as the *former*, for in *both* the father's consent was precluded; but in no case was he to be defrauded of the *מזון* or *dowry*. This was as much to be paid when his daughter was taken *against* his consent, as when *with* it, and so when taken *without* his knowledge and consent, as in this latter case. But on whatever account the money was to be paid, it alters not the point in question, for, saith God, *She shall be his wife, or woman*—Fr. *Elle lui sera pour femme* — BECAUSE HE HATH HUMBLLED HER, *he may not put her away all his days*. This is clearly explanatory of the original institution — *they shall be one flesh*, and what God hath joined together (by pronouncing then *one flesh*) let not man (either the parties themselves, or any human power whatsoever) put asunder.

I should rather chuse to let the scripture answer for itself, than appeal to human authority for its explanation. I will only here just observe, that I am by no means singular in my views of these things. Our ecclesiastical courts have proceeded on this principle, have called this *personal intercourse*, previous to any outward ceremony, a *marriage de facto*, and have compelled the

the parties to a public recognition of it *in facie ecclesiæ*, in the face of the church. See *Blackstone's Comment.* vol. i. 435, 439:— and in *Burn's Ecc. Law*, Tit. *Marriage*, there is this remarkable passage, “ Nor “ was he or she to be dismissed or absolved, “ if those spousals *de futuro*, by reason of “ *carnal knowledge*, or some other *act equi-* “ *valent*, did *become matrimony*.” By this it does appear, that, in the judgment of our *canon law*, if a man had promised a woman to marry her at a *future time*, and in the mean-time *lay with her*, or used the *freedoms of an husband* with her, such promise did, by such acts, become *matrimony*.

So sacred have our *canonists* esteemed this *act*, that where one of the parties have forsaken the other, and married another than the person to whom they have been *thus* joined, the *ecclesiastical courts* have pronounced sentence of divorce, with regard to the *second marriage*, *causâ precontractûs*, by reason of *precontract*. With what authority will appear by-and-by.

In *Bacon's Abr.* vol. iii. p. 574, we find the following case:—A. contracts himself with B. and after marries C. B. sues A. on this contract in the spiritual court. There sentence is given that A. shall *marry* and *cobabit* with B. which he does accordingly. They are *baron* and *feme*, without any divorce between A. and C; for the

marriage of A. and C. was a mere nullity \*.

That I am not singular in my opinion, respecting the one divine ordinance of marriage, will also appear from the remarkable statute of Henry III; which, as it is very short, I will transcribe.

“ To the king’s writ of bastardy, whether one born before matrimony may inherit in like manner as he that is born after matrimony: all the bishops answered, that they would not nor could not answer to it, because it was against the common order of the church. And all the bishops instanted the lords, that they would consent, that all such as were born † before matrimony, as to the succession

\* The law since 26 Geo. II. c. 33. is quite the reverse, the *precontract* between A. and B. would be a nullity, and the marriage between A. and C. valid. Such are the liberties which mortals have presumed to take with the ordinance of Heaven. But this cannot alter either the thing itself, or God’s views of it.

† “ Constantine, to discourage concubinage, and to encourage matrimony in persons who lived together in that way, ordered, that if a man married his concubine, the children which he had by her before marriage, should become legitimate. But the church meddled not with these distinctions of the civil laws, but regarding only the law of nature, approved every conjunction of one man with a woman, if it was with one woman and perpetual; and the more so, because the holy scriptures employ the name of wife or of concubine indifferently.

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“cession of inheritance, should be legiti-  
 “mate, as well as they that be born  
 “*within* matrimony, for so much as the  
 “church accepteth SUCH TO BE LEGITI-  
 “MATE. And all the *earls* and *barons*  
 “answered with one voice — that they  
 “would not change the laws of the realm,  
 “which hitherto have been used and ap-  
 “proved.”

Here was a strong push made, that the

“The first council of *Toledo*, A. D. 400, hath this  
 “canon, He who with a *believing wife* hath a *concu-*  
 “*bine*, is excommunicated : but if his *concubine* is in  
 “the stead of a *wife*, and he adheres to her alone,  
 “whether she be called *wife* or *concubine*, he is not  
 “to be rejected from communion.” See Jortin Rem.  
 v. ii. p. 294, 295 ; who adds — “This canon shews  
 “that there were *concubines* approved by the church.”

I would here add, that *Austin*, *De fide & oper.*  
 c. 19. says — “If a *concubine* should profess to know  
 “no other man, although she should be dismissed  
 “from him to whom she is subjected, it may well be  
 “doubted whether she ought not to be admitted to  
 “receive baptism.” So that it appears very plainly,  
 there was a time, when the conjunction of the man  
 and woman did not depend, for its validity and law-  
 fulness, upon human ceremonies and inventions.

In how many matters, as well as in many of the above  
 circumstances, hath the church (as it is called) changed  
 it's notions of things ! I have often thought, that if  
*Methusaleh* had begun his long life with the æra of  
 the *Christian church*, and had lived his 969 years in  
 the *Christian world*, his life must have been a very  
 miserable one, unless, like the *vicar of Bray* of famous  
*versatile* memory, he could have changed with the  
 times, and have held at least as many different opi-  
 nions as he was years old.

ordinance

ordinance of God should be in some measure recognized, as to its scriptural import and validity, in our municipal laws ; but human wisdom forbad it !

In antient *Rome*, there were three kinds of marriage, distinguished from each other by the names of *conferration*, *coëmption*, and *use*—the last of these came very near to the simplicity of the divine institution. It was, when the accidental living together of a man and woman had been productive of children, and they found it necessary or convenient to continue together ; when, if they agreed on the matter between themselves, it became a valid marriage, and the children were considered as legitimate.

Something similar to this is the present custom of *Scotland* ; where, if a man and woman have lived together 'till they have children, if the man marry the woman, even upon his death-bed, all the antinuptial children become legitimated, and inherit the honours and estate of their father.

The case is the same in *Holland* ; with this difference only, that all the children to be legitimated must appear with the father and mother in the church, at the ceremony of their marriage. See the *History of Women*, by *W. Alexander*, M. D. vol. ii. p. 252, 267.

Our system in *England* is very injurious  
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and cruel, as it destroys one grand inducement to matrimony, where a man and woman have lived together and had children, by stamping bastardy on the issue without remedy. Whence so inhuman a plan should be derived into the common law of the realm, cannot well be devised; but it must be supposed to have commenced in some of the darkest ages of ignorance and barbarism; for at the latter end of the twelfth century, *Pope Alexander III.* made a constitution, that “children born before  
“ the solemnization of matrimony, where  
“ matrimony followed, should, to all in-  
“ tents and purposes, be as legitimate as  
“ those born after matrimony.” By which it should seem, that the institution of *Constantine* had been totally laid aside; also, that the *church* thought very differently of marriage, from what it did in the fourth century. See before, p. 31, note.

Upon the whole, it may be concluded, that such laws as are above mentioned, would never have been thought of, unless the proposers and framers of such schemes of *post-legitimation*, had been convinced, that the *conjugal cohabitation* of the man and woman was a lawful marriage in God’s account, consequently the issue legitimate in His sight: therefore they were willing to reconcile matters as well as they could, between *human invention* and *divine institution*.

Having,



Having, I trust, established this truth, that where a man and a virgin are united by the *communication of their persons* to each other, they become *one flesh* in the sight of God, so made by his express command, insomuch that the man *may not put her away all his days*; it follows, that they are *indissolubly* united, beyond the power of *disunion* by any human authority whatsoever.

It is the contempt of this law, this primary law of nature, or rather of the God of nature, established from *the beginning*, and afterwards enforced and explained by the positive laws above-mentioned, which lies at the root of the evils complained of. For, *if a man* כִּי אִישׁ which is the sacred scripture's way of saying *any man, every man*, without distinction (for God makes none in the texts we have been considering, nor in any other) was deemed the *husband* of the *virgin he lay with*, and was obliged to make a public recognition of it, as enjoined by God so to do, without any liberty to *put her away all his days*; if the law of the land was as positive as to this, as the law delivered from God to *Moses* above-cited, we should see a wonderful change in the manners of the people, as well as a stop put to the daily ruin of innocent girls. Would the *great and opulent* debauch their tenant's or labourer's

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daughters,

daughters, or their own servant-maids, if they knew that this put it into the power of such poor creatures to claim their *seducers* as their *husbands*? Certainly not, at least not in one instance of ten thousand where it now happens. Must we not suppose, that the great and merciful Creator, enacted His laws for the protection of the *weaker* sex against the *stronger*, as well as for the prevention of *confusion and every evil work*, which must ensue from men and women's coming together and parting *ὡς ἄλογα ζῶα φρονιμά* (as the *Apostle* says) *like natural brute beasts which are without reason*? As therefore a contempt of the laws of heaven, is evidently the cause of the evil, it is as evident that nothing but restoring their due *respect and efficacy* can ever cure it.

How great an impediment to matrimony doth this also prove, amongst the profligate and licentious part of mankind? (which, as the world goes, I do not suppose to constitute a very small part of it) —for if men can gratify their passions, and indulge their love of variety, without the least danger of much further trouble than it costs them to seduce a poor unwary girl, they will hardly bind themselves to the painful œconomy of a family-life, or confine themselves to the attention and concern which a family must require.

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In every point of view, the contempt of God's law is very shocking; but be it remembered, that, though we have no municipal law to enforce its obligation, it ought to be binding and obligatory on *every man's conscience in the sight of the divine law-giver.*

There is no *statute* which punishes the defilement of our neighbour's wife, though it is a *capital* offence by God's law, and punished with the *death* of *both* the parties; yet surely none will say, that it is the less criminal before God: or, because the seventh *commandment* has no human municipal law to enforce its rigour, that therefore the consciences of individuals are under *less* obligation to observe it, or have more liberty to transgress it, than if it had.

But it sometimes happens, that a man having *enticed a maid*, &c. lives with her for a season, and then turns her off for another, not perhaps without making *some* provision for the *first*, and the conscience of the man is salved by this piece of *generosity*, as it is called. But the law of God is directly against such a proceeding—*He shall SURELY endow her to be his wife*, saith the *most High*: and the reason given for this, can never alter nor cease, because the act from which it arises can never be recalled. The law of God therefore as much remains



in force against *such* a putting away, as against *theft or murder*.

It is not unusual for women *so put away*, to marry other men, nay, sometimes they are portioned by the *seducer* for this very purpose. This fashionable way of getting rid of women, includes in it *many* crimes. First, It is a breach of that positive law—*She shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days*. Secondly, It is therefore a species of unlawful, forbidden *divorce*. It is, thirdly, *adultery* in the woman *so put away* to marry another. And, fourthly, *He that marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery*.

We never allow any thing to be *adultery* except the *outward ceremony* has passed; but God's positive commands are not subject to the controul of *human invention*. It would be a solecism in philosophy, to talk of setting the *sun* to the *dial*, and not the *dial* to the *sun*; it is as great a one in divinity, to argue, that the law of God is to be accommodated to the law of man, and not the law of man to the law of God.

Let us suppose for a moment, that, as it is said to have been the case amongst the *Spartans*, *theft* was not to be looked upon in a scandalous point of view, but rather allowable and commendable, if done so dextrously, as that the persons were not detected in the fact; Would this  
shake

shake the authority of the *eighth commandment*, or be pleadable before God as a justification of the *thief*? Consider the work of God, that which is crooked cannot be made strait, and who can make that strait which he hath made crooked? Eccl. i. 15. vii. 13.

From what has been said, I think it may be fairly concluded :

1.

That *marriage* is a divine institution, and, as such, to be abided by as revealed to us by its holy and blessed author.

2.

That those who look upon it merely as a *civil contract*, and therefore subject to the alteration and controul of men, have different views of it from those given us in the sacred scriptures.

3.

That a woman's *person* cannot be separated from her *self*; wherever she bestows the *one*, the *other* is bestowed also.

4.

That when she delivers her *person*, and consequently her *self*, into the possession of a man, she is (if not betrothed to another) by *that* act, inseparably united to him, so indissolubly joined, that she cannot leave him, *nor may be put her away all his days*.

5.

That if these truths were received, as they are indeed the truths of God, mil-

lions of women (especially of the lower sort) would be saved from ruin ; for, being protected, received, and provided for as God's law enjoins, as the *wives* of those men who first enticed them, they could not be turned out upon the wide world, with the loss of reputation, friends, and consequently all power of helping themselves, but by ways too dreadful to think of !

Before I conclude this point, I must desire not to be misunderstood, as if I meant to undervalue or despise *human ordinances*; they have excellent use, and, in this mixed state of things, are necessary to maintain that order and decency, which are so necessary for the regulation of the outward actions of men. I would rather infer their use and necessity, than doubt of either. When I say that the *marriage-service of the church*, doth not constitute a marriage in the sight of God, I say true; because by finding no such *service* in the *Bible*, and that marriages were had and solemnized without it, I therefore conclude *that* cannot be *it* which constitutes a marriage in the sight of God; for, if so, we must suppose that people before the invention of such service, were not *married at all*, but lived in *sin*; which is absurd and impossible. That *some* service, or ceremony, is expedient, for many good and laudable purposes,  
must



must be allowed—as, for the public recognition of the mutual engagement of the parties to each other—to ratify their union as to inheritances, and many other laudable ends of *civil* society; and as none can live together as *man* and *wife*, without offence, unless they \* *submit to the ordinance of man*, it ought, where it possibly can, *to be submitted to for the Lord's sake*. 1 Peter ii. 13.

But it is a great *abuse* of such things, to put them in the place of the institution of God; so that *this* is of no force or validity in God's sight without the other. Hence it is, that, men thinking they are not *married*, unless by a *priest* in a *church*, take advantage of their own villainy, and thus *seduc*e women, and *put them away* at their pleasure; whereas God's law binds them

\* This golden rule of 1 Peter ii. 13. appears by the context, to relate to that obedience which we owe to the *civil* powers. But then the laws of *civil* government must not be inconsistent *with*, or repugnant *to*, the law of God, for if they be, we must not *submit* to them, but rather *suffer* than *obey*. When *Nebuchadnezzar* set up his *golden image*, the three children of *Israel* would not obey the king's *decree* to worship it; they chose rather to endure the *fiery furnace*. Dan. iii. 17, 18. So Daniel vi. 10. And as it is with *civil*, so is it with *ecclesiastical* ordinances of men; these must be consonant with God's word, otherwise we must act as the *apostles* did, *Acts* iv. 19. Men may make laws for the public recognition of a *marriage* in the *sight of the world*; but to ordain in what *marriage* shall consist in the *sight of God*, is out of their jurisdiction, and depends solely on the appointment of God's *own* law.

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in the *first instance*, and declares the bond *indissoluble*. So that, as to the purposes of the divine institution, if a thousand *priests* were to read a thousand *services* over the parties, these cannot add to, nor diminish from their union before God, which, as in His sight, is created by the Almighty *fiat — they shall be one flesh*. This surely must be as evident, from the whole tenor of the sacred scripture, as that the pouring water on a person, or dipping him in water, in the name of the *Blessed Trinity*, is the complete divine ordinance of *baptism*, though no *act* is done, or *word* said, besides.

There are no where in the *Hebrew* of the Old Testament, or *Greek* of the New Testament, any specific names for *married persons*, such as the *English* words *husband* and *wife*—but איש and אשה *man* and *woman*—So ἄνθρωπος and γυνή, which also signify persons of the *male* or *female* sex in general; but when coupled with pronouns possessive, as אישה *her man*—אשתו *his woman*. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος σου *thy man*—ἡ γυνή ἐαυτῆς, *his woman*, they then denote the *marriage-relation*: but *how* that relation is entered into, so as to become *indissoluble* on both sides, hath already been shewn; to which we may add some observations on the word בעל which we translate *husband, married*. See Gen. xx. 3. בעל בעלה *maritata marito*. Mont.; literally,

rally, according to our idiom, *married to an husband*. Isa. lxii. 4. *וְאֶרֶץ תְּבַעַל* & *terra tua erit maritata*. Mont.; and *thy land shall be married*. Now *בַּעַל* signifies *to have, or take possession, or authority over*, as a participial noun *Ὁ ἔχων*, *he who hath*. Hence it signifies *to marry, to take possession of a woman, to have her*, as we say. See Deut. xxiv. i. xxi. 13. In *Niph*, *to be married, taken possession of as a wife*. Isa. lxii. 4. with liv. i. See Parkhurst's Heb. Lex. *בַּעַל*. So *Calasio*. “Significat dominium, magisterium, dominatus est, habuit, possedit” “ut dominus, maritus fuit, rem habuit” “cum muliere.” “It signifies dominion, the place or office of a \* master or governor.” “As a verb, he governed, had, possessed as a lord or master, he was married, or, *had to do with a woman*.” By all which, taken together, it appears that this *last* circumstance is that which brings her into the possession, and reduces her under the *dominion* of the man, according to that of Gen. iii. 16. latter part. See Deut. xxii. 29. where it is expressed by *עָנָה* *Compressit eam*. Mont.; *He hath humbled her*. English translation. Surely this affords an additional and conclusive proof, that a man's *taking possession of a woman* in the

\* Our English word *husband* hath this *idea*, according to *Johnson*—“*Hofsband*, master, Danish; from “*house* and *bonda*, Runic, a master.” See Dict.



sense above-mentioned, is in the language\* of sacred scripture *marrying her*, or making her *אשתו* *his woman*.

I should now proceed to consider *marriage*, or *matrimony* as it is called, in another point of view, namely under *civil* considerations, and, as such, an object of *human laws*: but before this can be done in a proper manner, some incidental points must be fully understood and discussed. Therefore the subject of *matrimony*, as a *civil* contract controulable by *human* legislature, must be deferred for a season.

\* This appears also from Deut. xxiv. 1. where the word *בעל* is evidently used in this sense—

כִּי יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה וּבִעְלָהּ

*et cum coieret & fœminam vir ceperit si.*

Pagninus. Mont. Marg.

Here the *taking the woman*, and *lying with her*, most clearly appears to make her the *man's wife*, as the rest of the verse and the three following demonstrably shew.

## C H A P. II.

## Of WHOREDOM and FORNICATION.

WHEN GOD, the CREATOR and LORD of all, was pleased to ordain and establish the means by which His creatures were to *increase and multiply, and replenish the earth*, in which primary command His *reasonable* creatures were equally interested with the brute part of the creation, and in some respects, if we consider *this* world as connected with *another*, infinitely more, and therefore the command was particularly addressed to them, Gen. i. 28.—it could not be but that the *act*, whereby mankind was to be propagated, must be totally *innocent* in itself: otherwise it could not have been consistent with the state \* of *innocence* in which man was when  
marriage

\* We are told, Gen. i. 31. that God *saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was טוב מאד very good*. We cannot, consistently with this account of things, doubt that every endowment of the human nature, whether of body or mind, came under this description; consequently, that those *desires* which were necessary to lead man to the propagation and continuance of his species, were without any evil whatsoever. We cannot sufficiently abhor the  
folly

*marriage* was first ordained. But that this *act*, innocent in itself as any other function of the body, might be kept within due bounds of *order* and *decency*, and all confusion and disorder avoided; God enacted certain *positive* laws for this very purpose, to confine within such bounds as seemed good to Himself to limit, that *natural*, but *violent* passion, which, for the great purpose of propagating the *human species*, was made an *inseparable* adjunct to the *human frame*.

folly and blasphemy of *Jerome* and some others, who say, that "*Adam's* desire to *know his wife* was the "*first sin* which made God repent that He had made "*man*, and was the occasion of turning him out of "*Paradise*." Coitus præmium mors—says *Jerome* contr. *Jovinian*.

No inconsiderable difficulty awaited this scheme, which arose from the question—"How then was the "*world* to be peopled, if not by natural generation?" But this was easily solved, by imagining that "*the earth* would have been supplied with *men*, as the "*heavens* are with *angels*, by the immediate creative "*power of God*, without the interference of any "*generation* whatsoever."

When such monstrous opinions can have been maintained by those who, in their day, were looked upon as *fathers of the church*, let it warn thee, Reader, against searching for truth any where but in the blessed word of God; dread as much to leave it for an instant, as a blind man would dread to walk amidst pits and precipices without a guide, or a mariner to sail amongst rocks and shoals without a pilot. Remember what the Psalmist says, *Pf. cxix. 105. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

Those



Those who imagine that this appetite is in itself *sinful*, either in the *desire* or *act*, charge God *foolishly*, as if He could ordain the *increase* and *multiplication* of mankind by an *act* sinful in itself: an absurdity little short of *blasphemy*! Sin, we are told, on the most infallible authority, is the *transgression of the law*, 1 John iii. 4;—and *where no law is, there is no transgression*, Rom. iv. 15:—when therefore this act is done agreeably to God's will, it is like all *other* acts so done, *good* and *not evil*. In order to make it *evil*, it must be done against some precept of God's law, otherwise it is as innocent as satisfying our *hunger* with *eating*, or our *thirst* with *drinking*. These may become *sinful* by their *abuse* or *excess*; so may the *other*; but in *itself*, and in its *lawful* use, it is as perfectly *innocent* as the two *former*.

We have observed before, that where a man and woman become *personally* united to each other, they are *one flesh*, and are forbidden to *put each other away*. This is the ordinance of marriage, and the *only* one which is revealed in the sacred scriptures; therefore we may call it the *only* one which God ever ordained.

But when men *corrupted their ways upon the earth*, Gen. vi. 12. this ordinance of marriage, sanctified by God's  *blessing*, Gen. i. 28. and ratified by His own *express command*,

*mand*, Gen. ii. 24. was, as every other *divine* institution, corrupted, perverted, and abused; and men, to satisfy their desires at as cheap a rate as possible, without the incumbrance of a wife and family, or confining themselves to the sober duties of maintaining, taking care of, or providing for their households, chose to have intercourse and commerce with women, like *brute beasts*, for the sake of mere appetite, and then to leave the women for the service of the next comer. Something of this sort may not improbably be the meaning of Gen. vi. 2. where it is said, that *they took them נשים women of all which they chose*. For though this word, in certain connexions, denotes what we call *wives* (as Deut. xxi. 15.) yet it signifies primarily the *female sex*, or *women in general*. Such traffic was offensive to God, an abuse of His *ordinance*, (see 1 Cor. vi. 15, 16.) and tending to destroy the *marriage-obligation*, not only by rendering the bond which was created by it ineffectual, but by inducing mankind to despise it, and set it at nought. All *genealogies* must be confounded, inheritances obscured, and relationship itself destroyed; for who could ascertain these things, so necessary to the existence of all civil society, in the commerce with *barlots*? *Confusion*, and every *evil work*, must ensue; and therefore the all-wise Governor  
of

of the universe forbad *whoredom* and *fornication* on pain of death *temporal* and *eternal*. See 1 Tim. i. 8, 9, 10.

The *Hebrew* word זנה is particularly appropriated to this offence in the Old Testament, as πορνεία is in the New Testament; and we shall never find it mentioned but with the divine *abhorrence*. We have no law to enforce the punishment which God annexed to it, or to treat an *harlot* or *whore* as a *capital* offender; but it is nevertheless offensive to God, and will now, as ever, meet with marks of His displeasure. *Know ye not, saith Paul, 1 Cor. vi. 9. that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers,—&c.—shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

So odious is *whoredom* in God's sight, that it is not only said to defile the parties who are guilty of it, but the very *land itself* was said to be *defiled* thereby. Jer. iii. 9. Though this text may perhaps primarily relate to *idolatry*, which is *spiritual whoredom*, yet it serves to shew the malignant nature of *whoredom*; otherwise this would not be made use of, as *adultery* is in the same verse, in a figurative sense, to denote the other.

God expressly commanded, that there should not be a *whore of the daughters of*  
 VOL. I. E Israel,



*Israel*, Deut. xxiii. 17. and ordained, that a woman *playing the whore*, if the daughter of a common person, should *be stoned to death*, Deut. xxii. 21; but if the daughter of a *priest*, she was to *be burned with fire*, Lev. xxi. 9. I mention these things as proofs of the sinfulness of an act, innocent in *itself*, when committed against a divine positive law. No human power or custom can alleviate its guilt, or make it less offensive to God than His word has made it; the person's conscience that thinks otherwise is sadly deceived.

Though what has been already said may serve as a definition of this offence, yet, to save the *Reader* the trouble of looking back, as well as to be still more explicit upon the subject, I would define זונה, or *whoredom*, to be “ a woman's giving her  
“ person to a man, without any intent of  
“ marriage, but either for the mere gratification of *lust*, or for *gain* or *hire*, and  
“ departing from that man to others for  
“ the same purposes.” This is being what the *Hebrew* scriptures call זונה, an *harlot* or *whore*. See Gen. xxxviii. 15, 16. We also find, that if a *virgin* gave her person to *one man*, and afterwards went to *another*, though for the purpose of marriage with the *second*, she thereby stamped *whoredom* on such an action, and was to be *stoned to death*. Deut. xxii. 21.

As

As *whoredom* is generally used in our translation, as denoted by the word *זנות*, and seems rather appropriated to signify the *woman's* share in the offence; so the term \* *fornication*, which is expressed by the same word in the original, seems to be the name given to the offence which the *man* commits in such *illicit* commerce. Though this observation may not hold in all cases, yet it is the best reason which occurs to me, for our using *different* words, to denote an offence of the *same* kind.

I readily confess, that the revival of God's antient laws against *whoredom*, amongst us, would be very dreadful, and indeed *unjust*, unless the whole consistent scheme which God has laid down was *all* to be revived together. The women, under God's law, could *force* their seducers to take them as their wives; or rather

\* Our English word *fornication*, is derived from the Latin *fornix*; which literally signifies *an arch or vault in houses*—and by a *metonymy*—a *brothel-house*, because these were in *vaults* under-ground. Ainsworth. Hor. Epist. 14. l. 21, 22. says to his *steward*—

— *Fornix tibi, & uneta popina;*  
Incutiunt urbis desiderium, video.

“ For well I know, a tavern's greasy steam,  
“ And a vile *stew*, with joy your heart inflame.”

FRANCIS,  
Hence the haunters of those places were called *fornicators*. See *Johnson's Dict.* Hor. Sat. lib. i. Sat. 2. l. 30, 31.

were deemed so *actually* married, as not to be put away. A woman had but to summons her *seducer* before the *judges*, to prove the fact against him, and their sentence, which must have been according to the law, must have been obeyed on *pain of death*. Deut. xvii. 12. Unless this were (as it ought to be) the case amongst us, it would be oppressive, unjust, and cruel to the last degree, to punish women with death, for being, by the treachery and villainy of men, forced into a way of life (however abhorrent in itself, or culpable) which is the natural, and, in most instances, the inevitable consequence of their being deserted by those who ought to have protected them, but against whom they have no remedy, or means to make them act the just and honourable part.

Under this head of *forbidden* lewdness, I would mention the practice of taking an *barlot* to keep for a time, and then, when pleasure or conveniency prompts, dismissing her. This is usually called *keeping a mistress*; but as there is no intention of *marriage*, and this is only done for the mere gratification of *lust*, it is not only a very evil example to others, and a defiance of the laws and good order of society, but doubtless comes under the *condemnation*, as it must be ranked under the description, of *fornication* and *whoredom*.

This



This was not the situation of the פילגשים or \* *concubines* amongst the *Jews*; these seem to have been looked upon as *wives*, though, in some respects, of an inferior rank. They were so far considered as *wives*, that the man who took them had such a propriety in them, as to make it a very great offence, if not *adultery* itself, to violate them; as appears in the case of *Jacob's* concubine *Bilhah*. *Reuben*, the eldest son of *Jacob*, had lain with her; and *Jacob*, Gen. xlix. 4. calls it "going up to his bed and defiling it."

Though the children of the *concubine* did not inherit as the children of the wife in most cases, yet in one very remarkable one we find they did, and that by the disposal of God Himself. *Leah* and *Rachel*

\* *Dr. Johnson*, in his Dictionary, makes a *concubine* signify—"a woman kept in fornication, a whore, "a strumpet:" but no such meaning of the word פילגש is to be found in the sacred scriptures. It is greatly owing to such interpretations of words which are used in our *translation*, that we are led to have very false conceptions, not only of words, but of whole passages, in the sacred volume.

So the word *adultery*—instead of keeping to the unvaried use of the Hebrew זנות we make it signify every thing which our ideas have annexed to the *English* term *adultery*. At this rate, the truth of scripture can never be fixed, but must alter with the languages into which it may happen to be translated, or with the ideas which change of times, or opinions, may affix to certain words in those languages.

are called the *wives* of Jacob; *Bilhah* and *Zilpah* were his *concubines* (as may appear from Gen. xxxv. 22.); yet the children of *these* inherited the land of *Canaan* equally with the children of the *former*.

I confess myself not master enough of the subject to define exactly the difference between אשה a *wife*, and פילגש a *concubine*, in all respects; neither have I been fortunate enough to meet with so precise a definition in any author, as to warrant a \* determination of the question. This is

\* The authors of the Univ. Hist. (vol. iii. p. 141.) call the נשים *wives* of the *first rank*, and the פילגשים *wives* of the *second rank*; "which last, say they, though most versions render by the word *concubines*, *harlots*, and *prostitutes*, yet in none of those places of scripture where the word is used, which are about thirty-six in number, is any such sinister sense implied." However, they state a two-fold difference between *these* and the *wives* of the *first rank*. "First—that the *latter* were taken with the usual ceremonies, and the *former* without. Secondly, with respect to their authority, and the honour paid to them and their children."

This is very clear, that the sacred *tongue*, made use of by the *Holy Ghost* in the scriptures, makes distinctions, which amount to demonstration of there being no foundation for confounding the פילגשים with *whores* or *harlots*. The words אשה and פילגש are sometimes used for the same person. See Gen. xxv. 1. 6. (xxx. 4. with xxxv. 22.); but פילגש and זונה are never thus used.

Calasso defines פילגש as—*Ancilla unita & addicta viro absque scriptura*, i. e. *contractu dotali & sponsalibus*.

is certain, no mark of disapprobation is set upon *concubinage* in the sacred scriptures, though they speak so severely against *whoredom*; which, to me, is an evident and conclusive proof, that there is some specific difference between them. Indeed we find the owner of the *concubine* called *her husband*; she *his wife*. So the text, Judges xix. 1. a certain *Levite* took to him פִּלְגֵשׁ אִשָּׁה *uxorem pellicem*. Mont.; *a wife concubine*: and in verse 3. he is called אִישׁוֹ *vir ejus*. Mont.; *her husband*, as we translate it. So the Fr. of D. Martin, *son mari*. The damsel's father is called, ver. 4. his (the Levite's) חָתָן *father-in-law*; and ver. 5. the Levite is called חָתָנוּ *his* (the damsel's father's) *son-in-law*; each of these relations by marriage being expressed by the word חָתָן. Surely this affords a conclusive proof, that the *concubines*, in those days, were in some sense *wives*; but, in what sense, it may be very difficult to determine exactly. The root חָתָן signifies to *contract affinity by marriage*. Gen. xxxiv. 9. Josh. xxiii. 12. In this last passage, the LXX render it by ἐπιγαμίας ποιῆν, to *make marriages*. So that though we cannot state the precise difference between the *wife* and

*bus*. "An handmaid united and devoted to a man, or husband, without writing—i. e. without any contract for dower or espousals."



the *concubine* in every particular, yet there was too great a similarity between them, not to be both widely different from what we call a *kept mistress*, in whom the man claims not a jot more property, than in an horse hired for a day's journey, nor is more care or concern usually taken about them, when once the fancy or humour of the *keeper* leads him to resolve upon *dismissal*.

The remedy of this mischief depends on that of the others which have been mentioned; all must stand or fall together.

## C H A P. III.

## Of ADULTERY.

**I** COME now to consider an offence against the positive precepts of God, which is of the most malignant kind, that of *commerce between the sexes*, where the woman is the *wife*, consequently the inviolable and unalienable property of *another man*.

This is truly and properly *adultery*, and described in the *seventh* commandment by a word, which, throughout the whole *Hebrew* scriptures, is confined to that single idea. Hence it is, that it is used, in a figurative sense, to denote the turning from God to the worship of *idols*. God calls himself the *husband* of His church; the church is represented under the figure of a *spouse* or *wife*; therefore, apostatizing from JEHOVAH to *idols*, is called, in a spiritual sense, *adultery*, II. liv. 5. \* *Thy Maker*

\* The words in the original are בעלך עשך in the plural number, *thy husbands, thy makers*; then follows, *Jehovah Sabaoth is HIS name*. Surely here, as in Eccl. xii. 1. and in many other passages, the careful reader must see a *plurality* of persons in *Jehovah* openly

*Maker is thine husband.* Jer. iii. 14. *Turn, O backsliding children, for I am married to you.* Then God complains, ver. 20. *Surely as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord of hosts.*

It is the misfortune of ours, as of all arbitrary languages, to want \* precision ;  
so

openly revealed. To imagine, as many do, that this fundamental of *true religion* was reserved to the days of the *New Testament*, is one of those consequences of ignorance with respect to the Hebrew scriptures, under which *we Christians* content ourselves.

\* One great reason of which is, the aptness of such languages to acquire new meanings by length of time. This is remarkably the case with ours ; for instance, the word *knave* formerly meant *a boy—a male child*—then a *servant boy*, and by degrees, *any servant man*. These meanings are obsolete, and now it signifies a *petty rascal*, a *scoundrel*, a *dishonest fellow*. See *Phillips's Dict.* and *Johnson*. Other instances of such mutation might be given. But this cannot be the case with the *Hebrew* language ; if it could, it must cease to be the word of God, and become the word, the uncertain word, of man.

In short, it would amount to a creation of *new laws*, which still must vary with the new use of words, and thus, from time to time, create *new offences*, in proportion to words acquiring new meanings. But the *mind* of God hath been graciously delivered to us in a language as unchangeable and fixed as *itself*. Therefore, what the *words* meant when recorded by the *sacred penmen*, they mean to this hour, and will mean for ever—for which very conclusive reason, it is impossible that any word of the *Old Testament* can acquire a new meaning under the *New Testament*. Wherefore the word *adultery*, can never admit  
of



so that when we speak of *adultery*, we include in it every idea which is usually affixed to the word by *custom*, whether right or wrong. There is a precision in the *Hebrew* language peculiar to itself; every word is derived from some fixed *root*, or is itself that *root*, which has a fixed and determinate meaning; and though the word branch itself into ever so many different, and seemingly contradictory senses, yet the original idea contained in the *root* will always circulate, as the same sap from the root of a tree, will always flow through the stem to the several branches, be they ever so many. From the want of such precision in our language, we are apt to fix meanings to the words of scripture,

of any other meaning or construction, than it received in the books of *Moses* and the *prophets*—what that was, will appear in the sequel.

How arbitrary languages have always been subject to change, by their being governed by fashion and custom, we may learn from *Horace*:

— Mortalia facta peribunt,  
Nedum sermonum stet honos, & gratia vivax.  
Multa renascentur, quæ jam cecidere: cadentque  
Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula; si volet usus,  
Quem penes arbitrium est, & jus & norma loquendi.  
All things shall perish, and shall words presume  
To hold their honours, and immortal bloom?  
Many shall rise, that now forgotten lie,  
Others, in present credit, soon shall die,  
If custom will, whose arbitrary sway  
Words, and the forms of language, must obey.

which,

which, when considered in the original, they will not bear : and in few are we more mistaken than in the meaning (the scriptural meaning) of the word *adultery*.

The words of the seventh commandment are—*לֹא תִנָּאֵף*—which we very properly translate—*Thou shalt not commit adultery*. But what is the true meaning of the word *נָאֵף* *adultery*? The only certain way to know this, is to consider its uniform signification throughout the whole *Hebrew Bible*; and whoever doth this, will find that it is never used but to denote the defilement of a \* *betrothed or married woman*; except in the *figurative* sense above mentioned, with respect to *idolatry*, where the *same* idea is exactly preserved.

\* The learned authors of the *Ant. Univ. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 137. rightly observe, that “adultery was punishable with death in both parties, whether they were both married, or only the woman.” But, they add—“We cannot affirm the punishment of a married man to have been the same, who committed adultery with an *unmarried woman*.” This *solecism* of “a married man’s committing adultery with an *unmarried woman*,” arises from the popular and improper ideas which are annexed to the English word *adultery*, and from not attending to the single and only idea annexed to the Hebrew *נָאֵף* throughout the *Bible*. Consistently with this, *Antonius Matthæus*, the civilian, affirms, that “adultery cannot be committed between a *married* man and an *unmarried woman*.” This is certainly true; because no trace of such an use of the word is to be found throughout the *Bible*.

In

In *Lev. xx. 10.* we have an accurate and clear explanation of the significant word נאף as well as of the commandment where it is found. *If a man commit adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death.* What is here called committing adultery with his neighbour's wife, is called, *Ezek. xviii. 11. defiling his neighbour's wife*; and *Prov. vi. 29. going in to his neighbour's wife.* If we turn to *Deut. xxii.* and consider the exposition of the seventh commandment which *Moses* was directed, by the *Holy Spirit*, to deliver to the rising generation, before their entrance into *Canaan*, from ver. 13. to ver. 29. inclusive, we shall find this idea uniformly preserved \* throughout. See also *Lev. xviii. 20.*

So

\* נאף “ Mæchatus est, adulteravit, adulterium commisit. *Prov. vi. 32. per metaphoram*—Idola coluit. *Jer. iii. 9.* Differt a זנה quod generaliter scortari significat, ut liquet ex *Oseæ iv. 14.* at hoc verbum non nisi in nuptam competit. Mercer in Pagn.

“ R. Solomon Jarchi notat dici tantum de nuptâ.”

*Leigh's Crit. Sacr.*

נאף “ To commit adultery with matrons. See *Litt. Dict. Mæchor. to adulterate, to commit adultery* [with a married woman] *Prov. vi. 29, 32—34.* Metaphorically. To worship idols, *Jer. iii. 9.* It differs from זנה, which signifies whoring in general, as is plain from *Hosea iv. 14.* But this word only belongs to incontinency with a married woman.

“ R. Solomon



So strict is this law with regard to this offence, that it even reaches to the defilement of a *betrothed* woman, who, in God's sight, is reckoned as the man's *wife* to whom she is betrothed. *If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman; so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.* Deut. xxii. 22. By these latter words we are taught, that the sin of adultery, like that of *murder*, was not to be looked upon merely as a personal offence, which was of no further consequence than to the parties committing it, but, if not punished as God commanded, brought guilt upon the very land itself, which could only be *put away* by the pu-

“ R. Solomon Jarchi observes, it is only used where  
“ a married woman is concerned.”

Aben Ezra thinks, that it signifies all *illicit commerce*, even *whoredom*—“ But I see, saith Grotius, on  
“ Exod. xx. 14, that this word is taken by the He-  
“ brews in the sense of *adultery* only, and so it is  
“ translated in this and the other places where it is  
“ used, by the Greeks, Latins, and other interpre-  
“ ters.” See Leigh, *ib.* and margin.

The LXX always render it by *μοιχεύειν* and *μοιχεύειν*.

However, not to rely on the faithfulness of *translators*, the accuracy of *lexicographers*, or the wisdom of *commentators*, either critical or explanatory, we must have recourse to the *word itself* in the original; and if we find, that in all its connections throughout the *Hebrew scriptures*, it never is used but in *one single sense*, we are not warranted to put any other upon it.

nishment of the offenders. Then follows ver. 22. *If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city and lie with her, then shall ye bring them both into the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die: the damsel because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he HATH HUM- BLED HIS NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE.*

Such is the law of THE MOST HIGH against adultery, or the defilement of a man's wife. Yet it is not the object of our municipal law as any public offence whatsoever. The injured husband may bring a civil action for private damages; but neither the adulterer, nor the adulteress, can be indicted or punished, \* as a public offender, by any one statute throughout our whole code

\* " In the year 1650, when the ruling powers  
 " found it for their interest to put on the semblance  
 " of a very extraordinary strictness and purity of mo-  
 " rals; not only incest and wilful adultery were made  
 " capital crimes, but also the repeated act of keep-  
 " ing a brothel, or committing fornication, were  
 " (upon a second conviction) made felony without  
 " benefit of clergy. But at the restoration, when  
 " men, from an abhorrence of the hypocrisy of the  
 " late times, fell into a contrary extreme of licenti-  
 " ousness, it was not thought proper to renew a law  
 " of such unfashionable rigour. And these offences  
 " have been ever since left to the feeble coercion of  
 " the spiritual court, according to the rules of the  
 " canon law; a law which has treated the offence  
 " of incontinence, nay even adultery itself, with a  
 " great

code of laws. How far this is seen to be for the comfort of society, and the honour of a *Christian* nation, let others determine; I can only say, that, if the law of God (which by the way is as clear and positive a law as can be conceived) took place, we should hardly hear of such daily offences against it, as now disgrace, dishonour, and defile the land. Such however is the *consistency* of our *statute laws*, such their *conformity* to the law of God, that they make a man a *felon*, and, but for the *benefit of clergy*, liable to suffer *death*, if he have *two wives of his own*; but he may seduce and debauch as *many wives of other people*, as may fall in his way, and he is free from punishment, except, as I said before, by way of *civil action* for the wrong done to the husband.

It is said indeed, that “our law considers marriage in no other light but as a *civil contract*, and leaves the holiness of the marriage-state to the *ecclesiastical courts*;

“great degree of tenderness and lenity; owing perhaps to the celibacy of its first compilers. The *temporal courts* therefore take no cognizance of the crime of *adultery*, otherwise than as a private injury.” *Blackstone* vol. iv. p. 64. Id. vol. i. 433.

Bishop *Burnet*, in his history of the Reformation, speaking of the state of the church before that period—saith—“The unmarried state both of *seculars* and *regulars* gave infinite scandal to the world; for it appeared



“ courts ;” but surely in a *Christian* land, “ the holiness of the marriage-state ” ought to be an object of the *municipal* laws, as of infinitely greater consequence to the *public*, and to the peace and welfare of society, than many other offences, which are properly deemed objects of their utmost severity. For, what are the consequences of *adultery*, even in a temporal view ? *All* its evils cannot be reckoned — but only to mention a *few* : — It must introduce a total confusion as to the offspring, a defeating of rightful heirs, an utter obscurity as to family descents and pedigrees ; for where *adultery* is, no man can know his own children, or even ostensible brothers and sisters ascertain their relation to each other : for which, as well as for many other wise causes, doubtless it was (as well as to preserve the sanctity of the marriage-institution) made *capital* by the DIVINE LAWGIVER. This we may humbly presume to be the case ; for this offence is introductory of that kind of disorder, which must, in the very nature of it, tend to destroy every bond of *civil* and

“ appeared that the restraining them from having  
 “ *wives of their own*, made them conclude that they  
 “ had a *right to all other men's* : and the inferior  
 “ *clergy were no better, &c.*” See *Crit. History of*  
*England*, p. 141.

religious society, and make the world, in a moral sense, a mere *chaos*.

Why then is *adultery*, notwithstanding it is so condemned by the positive law of God, so frequently, so shamelessly, so openly practised? It is because the law of God being disregarded in the conscience, and not enforced by the laws of the land in all its terror, its importance is not adverted to: for though outward laws may not reach the heart, yet, they frequently, by restraining the outward actions of men, may lead them to view such offences in a different light, than when there is no punishment attending them. Such is the depravity of mankind, that we find the saying of the *Preacher* generally true: *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.* Eccl. viii. 11. *Impunity begets security; and this must produce and multiply transgression.*

As to those reliques of the Pope's tyranny in this country, commonly called the *ecclesiastical courts* \*, their power is but very

\* An instance of the oppression of these courts, and the tyranny they exercise where they can, may appear from the following case:—*Ann Jenkinson* was presented at the *primary* visitation of the *Archbishop of York*, 1777, for *fornication*, she being with child by

very *feeble*; for which I and every free Protestant ought to be thankful. This sort of *imperium in imperio*, which excludes trials by *juries* in criminal matters, and substitutes paper depositions in the place of *vivâ voce* evidence, is too abhorrent from every principle of our free constitution to be endured; and I am astonished, that at the Reformation, their very *being* was not annihilated, as that of the *star-chamber* was afterwards, 16 Car. I. These \* *courts*, however, have cognizance of the crime of *adultery*, for which they can set the offender on a *joint stool* in a *white sheet*, under title *Penance*; unless, under title † *Commutation*, he or she can buy off their  
fin

by C. D. a *single man*. The case was, that the man had *promised* her *marriage*, not only privately to herself, but also before the *Justice*, when she swore C. D. to be the father of the child. He soon after married another woman. The *spiritual* court proceeded against the *poor girl*, thus abandoned by the man, and without ever *citing* her, sent an *excommunication* down, which was *red* and *returned* accordingly. Another was *cited* on such an account, but could not take out her *penance*, because she could not pay a certain *sum of money* which was demanded.

\* In antient times, the *King's courts*, and especially the *Leets*, had power to enquire of and punish *fornication* and *adultery*; but by 13 Ed. I. Stat. 4. called the statute of *circumspecté agatis*, these matters were turned over to the *ecclesiastical courts*. See 1 *Burn*, 662, 663. Also 2 *Burn*, 144, 145.

† All this wicked traffic of *penance* and *commutation*  
F 2 was



sin and shame with a *sum of money*. Whatever be the cause, most certain it is, that the crime of *adultery* daily increases amongst us, insomuch, that one would think many of the *British ladies*, once famed for their modesty, chastity, and sobriety, either never red their *Bibles* at all, or else only that edition of it, which was printed by the company of *Stationers*, in the reign of *Charles the First* (and for which Archbishop *Laud* fined them severely in the *star-chamber*) wherein they printed the *seventh* commandment without the word *not*, so that it stood, *Thou shalt commit adultery*.

But if in reading the *Hebrew Bible* we restrain the word *אֶלְנָא* *adultery* in the *seventh* commandment, to the *married woman* only, and to the *man who defiles her*, do we not leave the man, who, having *one wife*, takes *another* \*, out of its reach? I answer—It

is

was originally derived from the doctrine of *indulgences*; concerning which, *Tetzel* and his associates, when describing the benefit of *indulgences*, and the necessity of purchasing them, a little before the *Reformation*, thus express themselves:—"The efficacy of indulgencies is so great, that the most heinous sins, even if one should *violate the mother of God*, would be remitted and expiated by them, and the person freed both from *punishment* and *guilt*. For *twelve-pence* you may redeem the soul of your father out of *purgatory*."

\* The wise, holy, uniform, and connected scheme of God's *moral government*, with respect to the *commerce*

is not for us to judge in this matter, but by the rule of God's word; if *that* brings such a case within the reach of the *seventh commandment*, or of any one interpretation of it which is to be found in the *book of that law*, then such a man is *condemned*: if otherwise, he is *free* — For *where there is no law, there is no transgression*. Rom. iv. 15. *And sin is not imputed* (ἐλλογῆται, *reckoned, charged, brought to account*) *where there is no law*. Rom. v. 13.

By the *book of the law*, I mean the *pentateuch*, or *five books of Moses*, delivered by God himself to that eminent *servant*

*mercy of the sexes*, has *two* principal ends in view. The *one*, to prevent all *confusion of issue*—the *other*, to secure the *female sex* from that which must lead to it. Therefore a woman's going from *one man* to *another* is in all cases made a *capital offence*, and punishable with *death*. On the other hand, no man could *take* a woman and then *forsake* her. This, being apparently the source of \* *adultery* and *prostitution*, is positively forbidden. The law which forbids this, though conceived in *general* terms, without any limitation or exception, must, in some cases, fail of the provision it has made for the above purposes, without the allowance of *polygamy*; as, where the man *taking* the woman was *married before*. It is therefore necessary for us to enter deeply into this question; which I shall endeavour in the next *chapter*, not on the precarious footing of *popular prejudice* and *vulgar opinion*, concluding that we are wiser than the inhabitants of more extensive parts of the globe; but on the firm basis of *divine revelation*, concluding that *God is wiser than man*.

\* Matt. v. 32.

and prophet of the MOST HIGH, and by him committed to writing, and delivered to the people. To the *book of this law* the great apostle of the Gentiles evidently refers, Gal. iii. 10. where he says, *Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things which are written in the BOOK OF THE LAW, to do them.* Our LORD's forerunner, John the Baptist, declared *the law was given by Moses*, John i. 17. There is therefore no law but that which was given by God to Moses, nor was any *new law* enacted after the canon of the *Pentateuch* was closed by the death of Moses. The distinction and difference of *moral good and evil* were then unalterably fixed, and the nature of *both* invariably to remain the same. *What God doeth, it shall be for ever ; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it : and God doeth it that men should fear before Him.* Eccl. iii. 14.

As I am fully persuaded, on the most mature deliberation, that taking from God's law in *some* points, and adding to it in *others*, are the chief causes of the evil complained of, with regard to the ruin of *one* sex, by the lust, cruelty, treachery, and perfidy of the *other* ; I shall examine the subject before us the more freely : not supposing that *polygamy*, being made *felony* by that sanguinary statute 1 Jac. I. c. 11. is therefore *sinful* in the sight of God, any  
more



more than that *adultery* is *innocent* before Him, or one jot the more so, because our statute-book has ordained no punishment for it whatsoever. Nor does its being looked upon with detestation and abhorrence in this part of the world, any more prove the *unlawfulness* of *polygamy* in the sight of God, than the approbation and practice of it in other more extensive parts of \* the globe, can prove its *lawfulness*. All must stand or fall by God's *own* revelation of His *own* will, in His *own* law. To suppose that His law can be different in different parts of the world, which he  
*batb*

\* The *pride* and *self-importance*, so natural to fallen man, are the true reasons why people of all climes and countries are apt to imagine themselves in the *right*, and all others who differ from them in the *wrong*. The *Turk* despises the *Christian* because he is not a *polygamist*, the *Christian* in his turn abhors the *Turk* because he is—what shall decide between them? *Custom*, *usage*, *prejudice of education*, *national belief*, *municipal laws*—have as much to plead on one side as on the other: these may say—

*Non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites.*

The only decisive appeal which can be made, must be to the *Hebrew* scriptures, unless we are to suppose that the *Great Moral Governor* of the *universe* had no *mind* or *will* concerning the matter, or that he left his church and people in the dark for four thousand years together, touching an affair of such infinite consequence. As for imagining that he left the adjustment of *marriage* to the days of the *New Testament* (which is a popular notion amongst us) having  
 F 4 suffered

*batb made, and upholds with the word of His power; or that His one uniform jurisdiction doth not equally and invariably extend over all His reasonable creatures; is to think of Him as the poor idolatrous, ignorant Syrians did—The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not the God of the vallies.* 1 Kings xx. 28.

Near akin to this, is the supposition that God can change his mind, and be of one mind in the *Old Testament*, and of another in the *New Testament*; if so, He may now have changed His mind again, and neither of these books contain a single syllable which can be depended upon; so that after all the pains we can take to acquaint ourselves with the *divine* mind and will, we may be as utter strangers to them as the savages in *America* are.—But when we search the indelible records of truth, we find that the attribute of *unchangeableness* shines,

suffered the *Jews* to live in ignorance and error concerning it for so many preceding ages—this is as false in point of fact, as if it were said, that they lived without any *revelation* at all. As surely as the writings of *Moses* contain the law of God, so surely was the law of *marriage* adjusted and settled in the minutest particular. Among other reasons why this must necessarily have been the case, is that very conclusive one, which arises from the dependence of the lawfulness of the *issue* on the lawfulness of the *marriage*, and of course the preservation of true *genealogy* throughout the whole *Jewish* dispensation; a matter in which our dearest and eternal interest is concerned.

with

with a distinguished lustre; *I am Jehovah*, saith He, *I change not*. Mal. iii. 6. God is *one*—His will is *one*—therefore *this*, no more than *Himself*, can know any alteration, diminution, or change — What was *law* \* at the *beginning* will be *law* to the *end*; and therefore what that *law* is, as touching the point in question, I will now proceed, with the confidence which the love of truth inspires, and with a proper disregard for the fallacious and unscriptural reasonings of men, in the freest manner to consider.

\* This is true even of the *ceremonial law*, as to its *meaning* and *substance*. It cannot be less true of the *moral law*, which is founded in the relation which mankind bear to God and each other.



## CHAP. IV.

## Of POLYGAMY.

**I** PROMISED the *Reader*, that the proofs for what I advance, should be drawn from the *word* of God; and, for my own sake, as well as that of the *truth*, I find myself more especially bound to keep this promise, with respect to the subject before us; for if I were to go to *human* authorities, I should wander into such an endless labyrinth of difference and contradiction, as to lose sight of every thing but fruitless \* disputation.

That

\* Fruitless indeed! For the great *Puffendorf*, B. vi. c. 1. § 17. says — “Whether or no this practice be repugnant to the *law of nature*, is a point not fully settled among the learned.” He then gives the arguments on both sides, “leaving the decisive judgment to be passed by the reader.” So that upon the footing of *human wisdom*—*adhuc sub judice lis est*. The author therefore only considers it on the footing of the *divine law*, conceiving it impossible to determine its *lawfulness* or *unlawfulness* in God’s sight by any thing else. According to this law will all men be judged at the last day: therefore, to appeal to any other, in matters of conscience, is absurd to the last degree. There is no other principle or means of discovering the mind and will of God touching

That the mischiefs which must inevitably attend *polygamy* on the *woman's* side, do not accrue from it on the part of the *man*, is very clear : and on this principle, we may account for the total difference which is put between them in the *divine law* — the *one* punished with *death*, the *other* not so much as mentioned in a *criminal* light. So far from being prohibited or condemned by the *law*, we find it *allowed*, *owned*, and even *blessed* of *GOD* : and in no one instance, amongst the many recorded in scripture, so much as *disapproved*.

By *polygamy*, I would be understood to mean \*, what the word literally imports, the *having* and *cobabiting* with *more than one wife at a time*. Whether taken toge-

touching this, or any other religious truth, no other rule or measure of judging and determining any thing about it or concerning it, but only the *writing* from whence it is taken, it being wholly of divine revelation, and that revelation being only expressed in that writing. See Dr. Owen on the Scriptures, p. 18.

\* *Polygamy*, strictly speaking, is of two sorts ; either when one woman promiscuously admits of more husbands than one, or when one man is at the same time joined in marriage to more than one woman — The former of these is too abhorrent from *nature*, *reason*, and *scripture*, to admit of a single argument in its favour, or even to deserve a moment's consideration. The author therefore, by the word *polygamy*, only means the *latter*, throughout this treatise.

ther,

*ther*, as seems to be the case of king *Jeboash*, 2 Chron. xxiv. 3. or first *one* and then *another*, as JACOB, Gen. xxix. 28. or DAVID, 1 Sam. xxv. 43; it was *this* which was *allowed* of GOD, consequently practised by His people. The *putting away* or divorcing *one* woman, in order to take *another*, was as much forbidden in the Old Testament as in the New. GOD says, Deut. xxii. 29. *She shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days.* So before, ver. 19; and again, Exod. xxi. 10. *If he take him another wife, her food (i. e. of the first wife) her raiment, and her duty of marriage, he shall not \* diminish.* Putting away or divorcing a *first*, in order to take a *second*, is a palpable breach of these laws, and therefore treated by the great and infallible interpreter of them as a heinous offence against GOD, it being a breach of that obligation, laid upon the man, to consider his wife as *one flesh* with himself, and, as such, to cleave to her for life, as *bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh*, Gen. ii. 23; which our Lord cites, and reasons upon, to prove the abomination of such a proceeding, as absolutely contrary to the original institution of the *marriage-bond*.

This, however, was the common prac-

\* לֹא נָרָע—*not withhold—withdraw—keep back*—אֵן אֲפֹסֶפְסוּסִי, LXX; much less shall he put her away.



tice of the profligate *Jews* of that day, who abused the liberty of *divorce* permitted by *Moses*, in certain cases, to the most licentious purposes, so as to make *marriage* little better than a pretence for gratifying their lusts, divorcing *one*, in order to take *another*, and thus profaning the holy ordinance of *GOD*, by giving it no higher place in their esteem, than as a means of indulging their depraved appetites. A monstrous practice! against which *CHRIST*'s discourse, *Matth. xix. 4. &c.* is levelled, not against *polygamy*, as considered simply in itself. If we interpret this passage as such an explanation of *GOD*'s law *from the beginning*, as will serve to prove all *polygamists* are \* *adulterers*, we must condemn a large generation of *GOD*'s dearest servants and children; and instead of believing that *all these died in faith, Heb. xi. 13.* we must say, that many of them died in a state of *unbelief* and *disobedience*; and instead of looking for *Abraham, Jacob, David, &c.* in the kingdom of *heaven*, we must look for them in the kingdom of *Satan*; for *his* they were, and him they served, if *polygamy* be an offence against the law *from*

\* *Adultery* is marked as a mortal sin, *Gen. xx. 3.* in the history of *Abimelech* king of *Gerar*; and *polygamy* therein stands as utterly distinguished from it—this in the judgment of *JEHOVAH* himself. See post.

*the beginning*, under which these people lived and died, without the least repentance, or any signs of it, as *adulterers, fornicators, and whoremongers*. That is the infallible \* consequence of the common interpretation of this passage; for CHRIST does not ground the authority of what He declares on any *new law* which he was introducing, but on an explanation of God's law from *the beginning*, revealed first to *Adam*, afterwards recorded by *Moses*, that it might be transmitted to all succeeding generations, as the one rule of faith and practice, for all those to whom God's word should come, to the end of the world. *Neither with you only*, saith *Moses* to the people (then present at the re-publication of God's law, Deut. xxix. 14, 15.) *do I make this covenant and this oath, but with him that standeth here with us this day, before the LORD our GOD, and also with him that is not (or those who are not) here with us this day, i. e. with all succeeding generations, till time shall be no more.*

\* *For sin is the transgression of the law.* 1 John iii. 4. *All unrighteousness (i. e. all unconformity to the law) is sin.* 1 John v. 17. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die.* Ezek. xviii. 4. *The wages of sin is death.* Rom. vi. 23. *Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* Heb. xiii. 4. The weak arguments which have been made use of to excuse the *sin of polygamy*, as some call it, in the *patriarchs*, and the *Old-Testament saints*, will be fully considered and exposed in this chapter.

Therefore

Therefore CHRIST, so far from altering, changing, or destroying the law delivered from GOD by Moses, enters a *caveat* against such a supposition (Matt. v. 17.) *Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil: for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, 'till all be fulfilled—ἕως ἃν πάντα γένῃται.*—until all things be done. Hammond. And again (Luke xvi. 17.) *It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.* This not only stamps *unchangeableness* upon the law, but on its import, sense, and meaning, as one and the same throughout all ages and generations, as an invariable rule of life for the members of GOD's *visible church* upon earth, even to the least jot or tittle.

Notwithstanding, as this passage of Matt. xix. is the chief ground on which that absurd position is built, that "*Polygamy*, though allowed under the law, "is forbidden under the *gospel*;" or, "though permitted under the Old Testament, is forbidden under the *New*" (as if there could be a law in the New Testament contradictory to that in the Old Testament) it may be worth our while to consider the matter more minutely.

The question put by the *Pharisees*,  
 5 Matt.



Matt. xix. 3. is not, "whether it be lawful to marry *two wives* at a time, or to take one to another?" but—"Is it lawful for a man to PUT AWAY his wife for every cause?" The question concerns divorce, and divorce only. When we consider who it was that was to give the answer, we may be certain of its entire pertinence to the question. It follows (ver. 4, &c.) *He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they twain (i. e. the man and his wife) shall be one flesh; wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

With so close, so apposite, so conclusive an answer, grounded on the old marriage-institution, not on any new dispensation; they ought to have been satisfied that divorce was unlawful. But they urge him farther, and (ver. 7.) said unto him—*Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and put her away?* He saith unto them, *Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, SUFFERED you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so (i. e. that men should put away their wives). And I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication,*  
and

*and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he who marrieth her which is put away, committeth adultery.*

This last is the verse which has made the difficulty; for if this were meant to condemn *polygamy*, it amounts, so far, to a *contradiction*, or rather *repeal*, of the *old law* which permitted it; and then more than a *jot or tittle has passed from the law*. If it means that it was *always sinful*, and against the law of God, it condemns, as was before observed, all that ever practised it, and falls heavy on some of the greatest saints, that are recorded in scripture as patterns of *faith, holiness, and obedience*.

This difficulty, like many others in the scriptures, can only be solved, by attending to the peculiar circumstances of the persons spoken to, and the particular occasion on which the words were spoken; for want of this, we are apt to interpret the scriptures more by *sound* than *sense*, and thus make them *speak* what they never meant.

The *Jews*, at the time of their dispute with CHRIST on the subject of *divorce*, were fonder of *tradition* than of the scriptures, and of the teachings of their *rabbies*, than of the law of God; insomuch that CHRIST charges them (*Matt. xv. 9.*) with

teaching for doctrines the commandments of men: and (Mark vii. 9, 13.) with rejecting and making the word of God of none effect, through their tradition. There were several famous rabbies, whom they highly revered, but particularly *Shammah*, *Hillel*, and *Akiba*.

\* The school of *Shammah* taught, that a man could not be lawfully divorced from his wife, "unless he had found her guilty of some action which was really infamous, and contrary to the rules of virtue." But the school of *Hillel* †, who was *Shammah*'s disciple, taught, on the contrary, that "the least reasons were sufficient to authorize a man to put away his wife. For example—if she did not

\* See *Cruden*, under *divorce*.

† *Shammah* and *Hillel* are supposed to have lived about an hundred years before the destruction of the second temple. Some say they were cotemporaries with *Herod the Great*. See *Ant. Univ. Hist.* vol. x. p. 429, 469.

Of *Akiba* it is said—*Circa ea tempora vixit*—"he lived about those times." *Athan. Vinc.*

*Dr. Owen* on the scripture, p. 227, makes him armour-bearer to the Pseudo-Messias *Barchochab*, in the days of *Adrian*; when, in the pursuit of a design to restore their temple and worship, the Jews fell into a rebellion against the Romans all the world over. This was about the year 135. From these different accounts, it seems probable that there was more than one person of the name of *Akiba*, or, as some call him, *Aquiba*.

" dress



“ dress his victuals well, or if *he found*  
 “ *any other woman he liked better.*” Akiba  
 was still more indulgent than Hillell, for  
 he affirmed that “ it was sufficient cause  
 “ for a man to *put away his wife*, if she  
 “ were not agreeable to her husband.”

Josephus and Philo shew very sufficiently,  
 that in their time the Jews believed  
 divorce to be lawful on every trivial cause.  
 That the Pharisees had learnt to explain  
 the toleration of Moses in a like extensive  
 manner, may be gathered from the ques-  
 tion which they put to our SAVIOUR. The  
 above observations may therefore serve as  
 a key to the scripture under consideration.  
 The Pharisees (who asked, whether it was  
 lawful for a man to put away his wife for  
 every cause?) seem to have been deeply  
 tinged with that position of Hillell, and  
 to have adopted that particular cause of  
 divorce mentioned by him, that of *seeing a*  
*woman they liked better*, so putting away  
 one whom they liked less, in order to take  
 another whom they liked more. Against  
 this CHRIST may be understood to level  
 his answer—*Whosoever putteth away his*  
*wife, except for the cause of fornication, and*  
*marrieth another, committeth adultery, &c.*  
 not as condemning polygamy in itself,  
 against which there was no law, but un-  
 der the particular circumstance of unlaw-

ful *divorce* to effect it, against which the law of God was from *the beginning*. Such a thing was not contained in *Moses's permission*, nor mentioned therein, but was contrary to the very *institution of marriage*; and, as our LORD shews clearly, ver. 4, 5, 6, virtually forbidden by the very words of it. It was as unlawful for a *man* to put away or *divorce* his wife for *another woman*, as for a *woman* to put away or *divorce* her husband for *another man*: the *marriage-bond* being *equally* binding as to the matter of *putting away*. We may also observe, that though the *saints* of God, of whom we read so much in the Old Testament \*, practised *polygamy*, yet they did

“ \* The example of the *Heathens* and *Mahometans* may indeed be of no great force in the argument for *polygamy*, because it appears that those people are guilty of many violations of the law of nature; but the *polygamy* of the *fathers* under the *old covenant*, is a reason which ingenuous men must confess to be unanswerable.” See *Puffendorf*, lib. vi. c. 1. § 18.

Some have thought, that the examples of *Abraham*, *Jacob*, and the other Old-Testament saints, are too far removed into antiquity, to serve as proofs for the lawfulness of *polygamy*.—But did ever any one object to the history of *Cain*, as an example of the criminality of murder, or of GOD's thoughts on that subject? or does the *Apostle*, in the epistle to the *Hebrews*, scruple to recapitulate, by *name*, those heroes of antiquity, who did such mighty works by the

did not put away *one wife* in order to make room for *another*. This was as directly forbidden them by the law of GOD, delivered by *Moses*, as by CHRIST, on the authority of that law, to these *Pharisees*.

Here I would observe, that our translators of the *Bible* seem to have paid too much attention to the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, in the rendering the passage referred to for the justification of their doctrines about *divorce*. The *Pharisees* say, *Moses* COMMANDED to give a writing of divorce-ment, and put her away. Thus the *rab- bies* construed, *Deut.* xxiv. 1, &c. in the *imperative* mood; and we, by doing the same in our translation of that passage, have justified their misinterpretation, and even justify the *divorced woman's* going to be *another man's wife*. *She may go, and be another man's wife*; so we translate, verse 2. No marvel, if this be the case, that CHRIST is supposed to *condemn* something which was before *allowed*; whereas the whole passage is suppository or *hypothetical*, and only introductory of that

the power of faith, as examples to us? In short, doth he not assure us, *Rom.* xv. 4. *That WHATSOEVER THINGS were written afore-time, were written for our learning?* But what can we learn from either the *precepts* or *examples* of *old time*, if we are to suppose that GOD has changed his mind upon the subjects which they hold forth to us?



positive law, ver. 4. The whole should be rendered thus, if we would avoid the absurdity of supposing *Moses* to command, what God positively forbade, and to consign a *married woman* into the arms of an adulterer, in the very face of the *seventh* commandment, by saying, "*She may go and be another man's wife.*" ver. 2. This would be establishing adultery by a solemn law.

The *Hebrew* text should be rendered—  
*When (or if) a man hath taken a wife, or woman, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, and (IF) he write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house, and she shall have departed out of his house, and (IF) she go and be another man's wife, and IF the latter husband hate her (here we explain the 1 by an IF, why not before?) and write her a bill of divorcement, &c. or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife, her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to his wife after that she is DEFILED, for that is abomination before the LORD, and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee for an inheritance.*

Thus

Thus the *Greek* \* interpreters express the sense of these four verses, and the *Vulgar Latin*, yea, and the *Chaldee* paraphrase may be so understood. So *Tremellius* renders the words, and *Vatablus* explains them, *Scripseritque ei libellum repudii* & *dederit Ei in manu, ejeceritque, &c.* If he shall have written her a bill of divorce, &c. “ This is not an absolute sentence,” saith *Vatablus*, “ but ought to be joined “ to the words following, which shew “ that IF such things happened, that IF “ a man divorced his wife, and IF another took her, the former husband “ might not take her again, she having “ been defiled.” Which proves the same thing contended for by our LORD, in His discourse with the *Pharisees*, that

\* To the testimonies here mentioned, for this interpretation of the *Hebrew* text, we may add that of the learned *Buxtorf*; who observes, that in the words of *Moses*, Deut. xxiv. 1—4. this one prohibition only is contained,—“ *That a man shall not receive again to his bed, a wife which he hath once put away*”—but that the custom itself of putting away wives, is, in that place, neither approved by *Moses*, nor plainly condemned, but left as it were indifferent. And the observation of our Saviour, that this permission was given by *Moses*, because of the hardness of their hearts, sufficiently makes it appear, that the *Mosaical* indulgence doth not amount to an approbation, but signifies only a bare toleration, or connivance, exempting from civil punishment. See *Puffend.* b. vi. c. 1. § 23.

those *permissive divorces*, which, says He, *Moses permitted*, ἐπέτρεψεν—not, as the *Pharisees* would have it, ἐνετείλατο, *commanded*—made no difference as to the *marriage-bond* in the sight of God. The man who put away his wife, for no other cause than marrying another, which was the practice of these people, committed a great sin, not only by not *cleaving to his wife*, as God had commanded, but by *putting her away* for another woman, and thus *causing her to commit adultery* with another man. See Matt. v. 32. And in this sense, as *accessary* to his divorced wife's crime, might himself be said to *commit adultery*. But more of this hereafter.

If those *divorces* could have operated, as a *dissolution* of the *first marriage*, she would not have been *DEFILED* by marrying another man; but this not being the case, she was *DEFILED* \* in the sight of God, when put away by *unlawful divorce*, as when she went to another man without *any divorce*. Very striking are the words of Jer. iii. 1. *They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return to her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted?—*

\* The word (Deut. xxiv. 4.) which we translate *defiled*, is מִצְנֶה. The same word is used, Ezek. xviii. 6, 11, 15. for *violating another's wife*.

But



But where is any thing like this said of *polygamy*? That *polygamy* was practised throughout all ages of the *Jewish* æconomy, cannot be denied. It is equally evident, that it was the deliberate, open, avowed, and wilful practice of the most *holy* and *excellent* of the earth, of *Abraham*, the *father* of the *faithful*, the *friend* of *God*, *Is.* xli. 8. as well as of the most illustrious of his children; and this, without the least *reproof* or *rebuke* from *God*, or the most distant hint or expression of his displeasure, either by *Moses*, or any other of the prophets. No trace of *sorrow*, *remorse*, or *repentance*, touching this matter, is to be found in any one instance, and therefore many commentators are at a loss to maintain the *sinfulness* of *polygamy*, but at the expence of *scripture*, *reason*, and *common sense*.

Some say—"It was a *sin*, but *God* allowed it for the *hardness* of their hearts." That *Moses* suffered (*ἐπέτρεψεν*, *permitted*, *tolerated*) divorce, so far as not to exact the outward punishment of it in certain cases, is evident from the *supposed* circumstances in *Deut.* xxiv. 1, &c. But this was in order to avoid worse mischief amongst the wicked and profligate part of the community, such as mal-treating, beating, or even killing their *hated* wives.

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This is what we may suppose, in part at least, to be meant by our LORD, when He says—*Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives.* This is said of divorce, not of \*polygamy, as plainly appears by the words of the text. And herein *Moses* seems to have acted more as a politician, than as a lawgiver—by permission, not by commandment, like that of Paul, 1 Cor. vii. 6. It is not said—God suffered it—but—*Moses suffered you to put away your wives:* but, CHRIST adds, *from the beginning it was not so*—i. e. that men should put away their wives. Here is not the least hint about polygamy.

Can we suppose, however, that God suffered *Abraham, Jacob, David,* and others of His saints, to break His law, and this for the *hardness of their hearts?*—If they had hearts of stone, who ever had an heart of flesh? Ezek. xi. 19. Do not

\* The learned authors of the *Universal History*, vol. iii. p. 137, observe, that *Moses*, amongst other things, “was forced to indulge them (the Jews) “in polygamy.”—But what could this have to do with *Abraham, Jacob,* and those who lived before *Moses*? It is evident that polygamy was practised by the holiest of the saints, ages before *Moses* existed; therefore, ascribing the practice of it to an indulgence of *Moses*, is as great a mistake, as ascribing the original of circumcision to the law of *Moses*. Comp. Gen. xvii. 10—14. with John vii. 22.

reason

reason and common-sense start back at *such* a supposition?

Others have as absurdly said, "that, " GOD, being the sovereign, has a right " to *dispense* with his own laws, and having \* done this, *polygamy* was no sin.

\* The elaborate *Noldius*, after long arguments upon the subject, pro and con, of his own and other people's, which may all be seen Heb. Part. Annot. 225. concludes--*Sanctos veteres polygamos non peccasse coram Deo, quia habuerunt dispensationem specialem & extraordinariam.*—"The old saints, who were " *polygamists*, did not sin before GOD, because they " had a *special and extraordinary dispensation.*" But, 1. Where is such a *dispensation* recorded? 2. The very supposition of such a thing is as absurd as it is profane; more becoming the character of a *Pope of Rome*, than of the HOLY GOD. 3. The idea of a *special and extraordinary dispensation* to some, and leaving others under the *guilt* of sin, seems to be borrowed from the speech of one of the doctors (*Soto*) at the famous council of *Trent*, who said, "The antient fathers had many wives by dispensation, and the others, who were not dispensed with, did live in perpetual sin."—*Hist. of Council of Trent*, Eng. Transf. by *N. Brent*, p. 671. This directly militates against the *universality* of the law, Deut. xxi. 15, which is conceived in as general terms as possible, and most clearly supposes that any man might have two wives. The *Levirate* or law, Deut. xxy. 5, 6. which *Noldius* calls a *dispensation* for marrying the brother's wife, contrary to Lev. xviii. 16. is very improperly called so, it being a *positive commandment*, established for a *particular purpose*, and both the law itself, and the reason of it are there set down. This is not the case with *polygamy*, for there is no law which prohibits it, nor any to establish a *partial allowance* of it.

We

We find particular occasional instances of GOD's dispensing with the rigour of His laws on certain emergencies, and for particular purposes—as in DAVID's eating the *shew-bread*, which it was not lawful for any but the priests to eat. Also in some other instances which might be mentioned. But where do we find a *total* suspension of one of the commandments of the *moral* law for ages together? If it was as great a sin for a man to have *two* wives, as for a woman to have *two* husbands, why suspend it on the part of the *man*, and not on the part of the *woman*? Why invariably ordain punishment on *one* side, and not on the *other*, if each was equally sinful against the law itself? *Doth* GOD *pervert* judgment? Or *doth* the Almighty *pervert* justice? Job viii. 3. GOD is no respecter of persons. Acts x. 34. He accepteth (*i. e.* with undue and partial favour) no man's person. Gal. ii. 6. As many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law. Rom. ii. 11, 12. Nor is it conceivable that the righteous JUDGE OF ALL should Himself depart from the rule laid down for his vice-gerents, the judges of the earth, (*Deut. i. 17.*) *Ye shall not respect persons in judgment.* No other account then can consistently be given of the matter, than what may be gathered from the uniform and unvaried use of the word *adultery* in



in the *seventh* commandment, as relating to the *wife*; that is to say, as forbidding *polygamy* on *her* side, but not to the *husband* as forbidding *polygamy* on *his*.

Others would make the wise, holy, great, and good men, who were *polygamists*, wholly ignorant of the law, as to the true meaning thereof, and say—"The times of ignorance God winked at"—wresting this text (*Acts* xvii. 30.) which speaks of the blind *Gentiles* who were without the *written law* of God, and making it relate to the *Jews*, to whom *were committed the oracles of God*. *Rom.* iii. 1, 2. But, waving this, was ABRAHAM, that prophet, *Gen.* xx. 7. whom God, from the familiar intercourse He had with him, calls *His* \* *friend*? (*Is.* xli. 8.)—was *Jacob*, who spake with God *face to face* (*Gen.* xxxii. 30.) ignorant? Could MOSES, the sacred penman and expounder of the law, be ignorant? so ignorant, as not to know its true meaning? Could

\* God saith, *Gen.* xviii. 19. *Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?—for I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment. How Abraham could teach others to keep the way of the LORD, and yet be ignorant of it himself, cannot easily be conceived. If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. Matt.* xv. 14.

DAVID

DAVID be ignorant? If so, to how little purpose was his study in it all the day long? Ps. cxix. 97. Are we to suppose Solomon ignorant, to whom God said—*Lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee?* 1 Kings iii. 12. See 1 Kings iv. 29. &c. Comp. Matt. xii. 42. Luke xi. 31. Such a solution of the matter will more easily prove the ignorance of such commentators, than their assertions prove ignorance in the holiest and wisest men that ever lived under the light of the Old Testament, where alone God's law is to be found, and on the authority of which the whole New Testament can only \* stand. The kings of Israel were expressly commanded to write a copy of the law with *their own hand*; it was to be *with them*, and they were to *read in it*

\* Ignatius Epist. ad Philadelph. c. 8. introduces a Jew saying—*Εαν μὴ ἐν τοῖς ἀρχαίοις εὕρω ἐν τῷ Ἐυαγγελίῳ ἢ πιστεῦω*—nisi invenero in antiquis (vaticiniis) Evangelio non credo; which I heartily assent to, thus paraphrased—“What I do not find “in *Moses and the prophets*, I'll not believe in the “*gospel*.” But there is no danger of this, no hazard of being put to such a trial; for certainly the New Testament saith *none other things than Moses and the prophets did say should come to pass*. Acts xxvi. 22. See Rom. xv. 4. Luke xxiv. 44, 45.

*daily.*

daily. Deut. xvii. 18, 19. The *Priests* and *Levites* could not be ignorant; for their lips were to keep knowledge, and the people were to seek the law at their mouth. Mal. ii. 7. As for the people, they not only heard the law constantly, but were commanded to write it upon the very door-posts of their houses. Deut. vi. 9. Whatever else, therefore, their polygamy proceeded from, it could not be derived from ignorance. They could not be ignorant of the seventh commandment; and supposing that many of them, like their descendents in later times, lost sight of its spiritual intendment, yet the meaning of its outward letter they could hardly be at a loss for, especially as they must observe its uniform and unvaried use throughout the whole of their scriptures. If, therefore, polygamists sinned against the seventh commandment, they did it with their eyes open; and whosoever can believe that such men as we have mentioned, could do this without any scruple before-hand, or sorrow afterwards, or the least sign of repentance, must believe more than, for their sakes, and the sake of thousands of God's saints (who though not mentioned as polygamists, doubtless were so) I could wish even to surmise, or than is in the least consistent with the account



account which we have of them in the holy scriptures.

I shall only observe farther on this head, of attributing the practice of *polygamy* by the Old-Testament saints to *ignorance*, that we must charge *ignorance* on God's high-priest *Jehoiada*, who stands recorded, 2 Kings xii. and 2 Chron. xxiv. as one of the wisest, best, and greatest characters that ever lived, as likewise one of the most exemplary promoters of God's honour, and a chief instrument of the reformation of religion in *Judah*, in the reign of king \* *Jehoash*. If so, our charge of *ignorance* will not stop here, but even reach the *Spirit of God Himself*. For He says, that *Joash did right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest*, 2 Chron. xxiv. 2. or (as it is 2 Kings xii. 2.) *all his days, wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him*; and yet we are told, ver. 3. that *Jehoiada took for him TWO WIVES, and he begat sons and daughters*. On whom shall the commentator fix *ignorance*? On *Jehoiada* the high-priest, for teaching his pupil king *Jehoash* to be a *polygamist*, by taking for him *two wives*? or on *Jehoash*, who received them, and *cohabited with them*?

\* Called JOASH also, 2 Chron. xxiv.

er on the *Holy Ghost*, who bears testimony to the *rectitude* of king *Jeboash's* conduct, *all his days wherein Jeboiada the priest instructed him?*

The learned Bishop *Patrick*, on 2 Chron. xxiv. 3. says, that “*Jeboiada* did not “take these *two wives* for the king, but “for himself.” Supposing it to be so, the proof of the lawfulness of *polygamy* in *Jeboiada's* opinion is equally strong. But this sense of the *Bishop's* will hardly arise from the position and construction of the *Hebrew* text: for it does not stand in the order of our translation—*And Jeboiada took for him two wives*—so as to make *him* the relative to *Jeboiada*; but

uxores duas Jehoiada ei tulit Et. Mont.  
וַיֵּשֶׁב יְהוֹיָדָה לָהּ שְׁנֵי נָשִׁים \*  
wives two Jehoiada him to brought And

So that the *לָהּ* to *him* stands as the relative to the chief subject of the preceding verse, which is evidently king *Jeboash*, whose history the sacred penman is here recording, as a part of which this action of *Jeboiada's* is here related.

The *Bishop* is conscious of a difficulty

\* The verb *וַיֵּשֶׁב* certainly signifies to take a wife for one's self—but it also signifies to take or bring a wife for another. See *Ezra* ix. 2, 12. *Neh.* xiii. 25; in which passages the word *וַיֵּשֶׁב* is used in both these senses.

in his interpretation, arising from a constant tradition of the Jews, that the *high-priest* was to have but *one wife* at a time, which was founded on *Lev. xxi. 13, 14*. This he endeavours to get rid of by saying—"It is not certain that *Jehoiada* was *high-priest*, for he is every where called *Jehoiada the priest*, and but once only, (ver. 6.) *the chief*."—But this is no argument at all against his being *high-priest*; for *Abiathar*, who was *high-priest*, is nowhere called so in the Old Testament, but always *the priest*; so his father *Abimelech*, as the *Bishop* himself observes on *1 Sam. xxi. 1*; so *Eli the priest*, *1 Sam. ii. 11*; *Zadoc the priest*, *1 Kings iv. 2*; and even *Aaron* himself, *Pf. xcix. 6*. The title of *נָשִׂא* the *chief*, or *head*, which is given to *Jehoiada*, ver. 6. signifies certainly more than "the chief of one of the courses of priests."—His having apparently the conduct and management of every thing \* relating to the temple, his anointing king *Jeboash* (comp. *1 Kings i. 45*.) and many other circumstances related of him, bespeak him plainly to be no less than *high-priest*; and therefore

\* As well as the entire management and command over all the *Priests* and *Levites*. See *2 Chron. xxiii. 4—8*.



the word *רֹאשׁ* chief, or head, denotes this here, as it does that *Seraiah* was \* high-priest, 2 Kings xxv. 18. For all which reasons it seems clear, that *Jehoiada* (who had before married *Jehoshabeath*, the sister of king *Abaziah*, 2 Chron. xxii. 11.) took not these two wives for himself, but for king *Joash*.

These things are too plain not to force conviction on the minds of many; therefore it is that they have said, with the learned author of the "*Historical Library*"—"Polygamy, though not expressly allowed, is however tacitly implied in the law of Moses." This is going farther than those I have mentioned, but yet does not come up to the matter. For if it be forbidden by the seventh commandment, or by any other law, it is as contradictory to scripture to say, that it was tacitly implied, as that it was expressly allowed. This last is the truth; it was expressly allowed, and that by God Himself: a direct proof this, that it was not forbidden by the seventh commandment, or by any other law, unless we can suppose the all-wise God to be so inconsistent with Him-

\* That *Seraiah* was descended in a right line from *Eleazar* the son of *Aaron*, appears 1 Chron. vi. 4—14. and of course succeeded to the high-priesthood. As such he is registered. Ibid.

self, as to *forbid*, and yet *allow*, the same thing under the same circumstances.

Some have found out, that "*polygamy*" was allowed for the more expeditious "*peopling* of the world."—Supposing it is a means of increasing \* *population*

\* This common notion, or rather *vulgar error*, is adopted by *St. Augustine*, *De Civ. Dei*. lib. xvi. c. 38. where, speaking of the antient *polygamy*, he says it was lawful—*Quoniam multiplicandæ posteritatis causâ plures uxores lex nulla prohibebat.* "*Be-*" "*cause, for the sake of multiplying posterity, no*" "*law forbade many wives.*"—But let us suppose ten men and ten women—can it be imagined, that if these ten women are each severally married to one man, they are not likely to have as many children, as if they were all married to one of the men? *Porter*, in his *Observations on the Turks*, says, p. 292. that the number of children in *Turkish* families is not what the idea of *polygamy* suggests; that they have not, in general, so many children as are found in common families of *Christians and Jews*.—He even uses this as an argument against *polygamy*. On the other hand, many have contended for the permission of *polygamy* as "*a speedier means of peopling*" "*the world; it appearing, that in polygamous coun-*" "*tries, people abound more than in others that are*" "*monogamous.*" But I take the real state of the case, upon the whole, to be this; wherever there are the most *married women*, there the increase of the people will be the greatest. *Polygamy*, therefore, as tending to increase the number of *married women*, must certainly tend to *population*. But then we are to suppose, that women who are married under *polygamous* contracts, would not otherwise be married at all; for in no other view can *polygamy* be said to increase *population*; in this it certainly must.

(which

(which by the way will admit of great doubt) yet where was the use of this amongst the *Jews*, when, before their entrance into *Canaan*, they were ~~as~~ the *stars in heaven for multitude*? *Dent. i. 10*; and yet *polygamy* did not cease after their entrance into the *promised land*.

As for all popular arguments against *polygamy*, which the wisdom of this world has invented, and believed as so many certain conclusions on the side of truth, they equally apply against the wisdom and holiness of God in allowing it, as against those who maintain it: therefore, as *He will be justified in His sayings, and clear when He is judged*, *Rom. iii. 4*. the best answer which can be given, for the present, is that included in the awful question of the *Apostle*, *Rom. ix. 20*. "*Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?*" Though this immediately relates to another point, yet it is applicable to all the vain reasonings of men against the dispensations of *Providence*, either in the *natural* or *moral* world. Which said reasonings, when thoroughly canvassed, and set in their true light, will appear to be neither more nor less, than the pleadings of human *pride*, on the behalf of human *ignorance*. Our prejudices and our opinions reciprocally affect each



other, and, upon examination, they will usually be found as much alike as the *image* and the *mold* it is cast in.

Though it be beside my design, in this treatise, to consider the subjects thereof on any other footing than as they appear in the scriptures; yet I will so far depart from my purpose, as to take notice of a *popular argument against polygamy*, which, in the minds of some learned and considerate men, has been of such importance, as to outweigh all that could be said for it. It is this—"The *males* and *females* brought into the world are nearly on a balance, only allowing a little excess on the side of the *males*; whence it follows, that nature intends only one wife for the same person; if they have more, some others must \* go without any."

\* So must it be even upon the principle of *monogamy*; for if, according to these calculators, there be more *males* than *females*, it is not possible that every man can have a wife; some must go without. However, a departure either way from the original proportion of *one male* and *one female*, destroys all arguments which can be drawn from thence against *polygamy*; for the precedent which this might otherwise have been, being departed from by the *Creator* himself, it of course ceases with respect to his creatures. Major *Grant* observes, that a little excess on the side of the *males*—"is to make up for the extraordinary expence thereof in war and at sea."

“any.” This argument, plausible as it may seem, wants one essential to *solidity*, which is *truth*. For saying which, I will,

“*sea*”—to which others have added, as a consideration also, “the laborious and dangerous employments in which men are engaged, and women are not.” As for *war*—it is written—*Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts* (ἡδονῶν, the desires after sensual gratifications) *which war in your members? Ye lust and have not, ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain, &c.* James iv. 1, 2. So Plato in his *Phædo*, § 10. Edit. Cantab. 1673; p. 88. καὶ γὰρ πόλεμοι καὶ στάσεις καὶ μάχαι ἐξ ἐν ἄλλο παρὰ τοῦ σώματος καὶ διὰ τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν. “For nothing but the *body and its lusts* (or evil desires) *produce wars, seditions, battles.*” Can it be reasonably supposed, that the *Almighty*, whose gracious command is—*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*—is directed, in the proportion of *males and females*, by the most horrid and fatal proofs which men are daily giving of their enmity to Him and each other! and that more men than women are born into the world on this account?

These wars, together with the extension of commerce, and the calls of numberless artificial wants which luxury has introduced, certainly expose the lives of men to the dangers of the *sea*. But who hath required this at their hands?—Let an *Heathen* give the answer:

Necquicquam DEUS abscidit  
Prudens oceano dissociabili  
Terras, si tamen impia  
Non tangenda rates transiliunt vada.  
Audax omnia perpeti  
Gens humana ruit per velitum nefas.

HOR.

will, by way of justification, transcribe  
 a few paragraphs from Dr. FORSTER'S  
 "Observations during a Voyage round the  
 "World"

GOD hath the realms of earth in vain  
 Divided by th' uninhabitable main,  
 If ships profane, with fearless pride,  
 Bound o'er th' inviolable tide.  
 No laws, or human or divine,  
 Can the presumptuous race of man confine.

GOD hath made man upright, but they have sought  
 out many inventions, saith Solomon, Eccl. vii. 29.  
 To imagine that the providential dispensations of  
 the ALL-WISE GOD, are to be accommodated to  
 these, or regulated by them, is surely too absurd to  
 bear an argument.

As for "laborious employments, many of which  
 "are attended with danger, and which usually fall  
 "to the share of the males," let as many of these  
 be selected as can be deemed necessary, and then,  
 against them, let us set—the many diseases to which  
 females are peculiarly liable, and to which men are  
 not—let us add to these the peril of child-birth,  
 and then, this last supposed reason for more males  
 being born than females, will be as groundless as  
 the two former.

I should imagine, that no opinions whatsoever,  
 however false and absurd, are without having reasons  
 given for them. Nor is it to be doubted, that a  
 Ptolemaist would give as many reasons for the sun's  
 going round the earth, as a Copernican would for the  
 earth's going round the sun.

The following question is said to have been once  
 laid before a certain very learned body:—Take a tub  
 of water weighing one ton weight—into which put  
 a salmon of thirty pounds weight; Why will not  
 the tub be specifically heavier than before the fish  
 was



“ *World* ”—published 1778. This ingenious author, who seems to be a most strenuous *monogamist*, after speaking of “ *Monogamy* established in the isles of the *South Sea*,” very candidly says—  
 “ But here I find myself obliged to confess, that I am not as yet persuaded of the great and universal argument for *monogamy*, viz. the *equal proportion of women to men*; as, in my opinion, it is not clearly proved that this just proportion holds place in all countries and climates. On the contrary, I am of opinion, that the constitution of food and climate, and the prevailing custom of marrying many wives, have, by length of time, produced a considerable disparity between the numbers of men and women; so that now, to one man, several women are born. This observation is really confirmed by fact; for *all* the voyagers unani-

was put into it? The fact being taken for granted, produced many *wise* reasons for it; but none were thought *so wise* and adequate, as—*Corpora non gravitant in loco suo*—therefore the *fish* being in its *place* or proper element, lost its power of adding any thing to the weight of the tub of water. At last, it was proposed to weigh the tub, both with and without the *fish*; when, to the confusion of all their reasonings, the matter ended as the reader may conceive.

“ *moufly*

"moufly agree, that among all the *Afri-*  
 "can nations *polygamy* is customary; nor  
 "has any one observed that there are  
 "men among these nations *without*  
 "wives, for every one is matched to *one*  
 "or *more* females." Here he refers to  
 Bosman's "Description of the coast of  
 "Guinea," "who likewise," says the  
 Doctor, "expressly declares, that the  
 "number of women *much* exceeds that  
 "of the men."—"When a *polygamous*  
 "nation lives in the neighbourhood of  
 "monogamous nations, there is always a  
 "probability that the women necessary  
 "for so many men who have *more* than  
 "one wife, are obtained by stealth, force,  
 "or by commerce from the neighbour-  
 "ing nations; but in *Africa*, all the  
 "nations are *polygamous*; every man is  
 "married, and has *more* than *one* wife.  
 "He cannot procure these wives from  
 "the neighbouring tribes where the  
 "same custom prevails: it is therefore,  
 "in my opinion, a clear and settled  
 "point, that the women born among  
 "these nations must be more numerous  
 "than the males.

"Though the colonists at the *Cape of*  
 "Good Hope are monogamous, I observed,  
 "in the various families of the town and  
 "country,

“ country, the number of \* females to  
 “ prevail.” — “ It has been observed † in  
 “ Sweden, more females than males have  
 “ been born during the latter part of  
 “ this century—it is reported in the  
 “ kingdom of *Bantam*, even ten wo-  
 “ men are born to *one* man ;” and refers  
 to “ Lord *Kaimes*’s Hist. of Man, vol. i.  
 “ p. 176.” *Montesquieu*, Spirit of Laws—  
 Eng. Transf. 4th edition, octavo—vol. i.  
 p. 374. mentions this—“ I confess,” says  
 he, “ if what history tells us be true,  
 “ that at *Bantam* there are *ten* women to  
 “ *one* man, this must be a case peculiarly  
 “ favourable to *polygamy*.”

From all this it appears to me, that,  
 unless we can find that God delivered to

\* *Kempfer*, on numbering the people of *Meaco*, in  
 the kingdom of *Japan*, found the *females* to exceed  
 the *males* in the following proportion :

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| Females, | 223,573 |
| Males,   | 182,072 |

41,501 more *females* than *males*.

Spirit of Laws, vol. i. p. 373.

† How far this observation may hold good in this  
 kingdom I know not—but, being lately on an oc-  
 casional visit to the *vicar* of a country village, I had  
 a curiosity to look into the parish register of births ;  
 I took ten years in the latter part of the last century,  
*viz.* from 1670 to 1679, inclusive, and there ap-  
 peared to have been born in that space 19 more *males*  
 than *females*.

In the space between 1770 to 1779, inclusive, the  
 number of *females* born exceeded that of the *males*  
 by 27.

*Moses*



*Moses* as many different laws to govern the actions of His reasonable creatures, as there are different parts of the globe inhabited by them, so as that there is one law for the inhabitants of *Asia* and *Africa*, and another for those of *Europe*, this sort of arguments, drawn from the outward appearances of things in different parts of the world, proves nothing on either side of the question, but the exceeding ignorance of mankind as touching the acts and dispensations of that INFINITELY WISE BEING, whose judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out! Rom. xi. 33.

The best and fairest, and indeed the only way to get at the truth, on this as on every other occasion where religion is concerned, is to lay aside *prejudice*, from whatever quarter it may be derived, and to let the *Bible* speak for itself. Then we shall see that *polygamy*, notwithstanding the *seventh* commandment, was allowed by God *Himself*, who, however others might mistake it, must infallibly know His own *mind*, be perfectly acquainted with His own *will*, and thoroughly understand His own *law*. If He did not intend to allow *polygamy*, but to prevent or condemn it, either by the *seventh* commandment, or by some other law,

law, how is it possible that He should make laws for its *regulation*, any more than He should make laws for the *regulation* of *theft* or *murder*? How is it conceivable that He should give the least countenance to it, or so express His approbation of it, as even to *work miracles* in support of it? For the making a woman *fruitful* who was naturally *barren*, must have been the effect of supernatural power.—He *blessed*, and in a distinguished manner *owned* the issue—and declared it legitimate to all intents and purposes. If this be not *allowance*, what is? As to the *first*, namely, his making laws for the *regulation* of *polygamy*, let us consider what is written, *Exod. xxi. 10. If he (i. e. the husband) take him another wife (not--in so doing he sins against the seventh commandment, recorded in the preceding chapter—but) her food, her raiment (i. e. of the first wife) and her duty of marriage, he shall not diminish.* Here God positively forbids a *neglect*, much more the *divorcing* or *putting away* the *first wife*, but charges no *sin* on taking the *second*.

2dly. When *Jacob* married *Rachel* she was *barren*, and so continued for many years; but God did not leave this as a punishment upon her for marrying a man who had *another wife*. It is said, *Gen. xxx. 22. that God remembered Rachel,*  
and

and GOD bearkened unto her—and opened her womb—and she conceived and bare a son—and said, GOD hath taken away my reproach. Surely this passage of scripture ought to afford a complete answer to those who bring the words of the marriage-bond, as cited by CHRIST, Matt. xix. *They twain shall be one flesh*, to prove polygamy sinful; and should lead us to construe them, as by this instance, and many others, the LAWGIVER Himself appears to have done; that is to say, where a woman, not betrothed to another man, unites herself in personal knowledge with the man of her choice, let that man's situation be what it may—they twain shall be one flesh. How otherwise do we find such a woman as Rachel, united to Jacob, who had a wife then living, praying to GOD for a blessing on her intercourse with Jacob, and GOD bearkening unto her, opening her womb, removing her barrenness, and thus, by miracle, taking away her reproach? We also find the offspring legitimate, and inheritors of the land of Canaan; a plain proof that Joseph and Benjamin were no bastards, or born out of lawful marriage. See a like palpable instance of GOD's miraculous blessing on polygamy in the case of Hannah, 1 Sam. i. and ii. — These instances serve also to prove, that, in  
 GOD's



God's account, the *second* marriage is just as valid as the *first*, and as obligatory, and that our making it *less so*, is contradictory to the divine wisdom.

3dly. God blessed and owned the issue. How eminently this was the case with regard to *Joseph*, see Gen. xlix. 22—26; to *Samuel*, see 1 Sam. iii. 19. It was expressly commanded; that a *bastard*, or son of a woman who was with child by \* *whoredom*, should not enter into the congregation of the LORD, even to his tenth generation. Deut. xxiii. 2. But we find *Samuel*, the offspring † of *polygamy*, ministering to the LORD in the tabernacle at *Shiloh*, even in his very childhood, clothed with a linen ephod before *Eli* the priest. See this whole history, 1 Sam. i. and ii. Who then can doubt of *Samuel's* legitimacy, consequently of God's allowance of, and blessing on *polygamy*? If such second marriage was in God's account null and void, as a sin against the original law of marriage, the seventh commandment, or any other law of God, no mark of legitimacy could have been found on the issue; for a null and void marriage is tantamount to no marriage at all; and if no marriage, no legitimacy of the issue can possibly be. Instead of such a bles-

\* in πορνεία. LXX.

† See Appendix, N<sup>o</sup> 1. vol. ii.

ing as *Hannah* obtained, we should have found her and her husband *Elkanah* charged with *adultery*, dragged forth and stoned to death; for so was *adultery* to be punished. All this furnishes us with a conclusive proof, that the having more than one wife with which a man cohabited, was not *adultery* in the sight of God; or, in other words, that it never was reckoned by Him any sin against the seventh commandment, the original marriage-institution, or any other law whatsoever.

4thly. But there is a passage (*Deut. xxi. 15.*) which is express \* to the point, and amounts to a demonstration of God's allowance of *polygamy*. If a man have two wives, one beloved and another hated, and they have borne him children, both the beloved and the hated, and if the first-born be her's that was hated, then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved first-born before the son of the hated, which is indeed the first-born, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath; for he is the beginning of his strength, and the right of the first-born is his.

\* "Herein is a law, tacitly implied at least, for "a man to have two wives." *Ant. Univ. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 141.

On

On the footing of this law, the marriage of *both* women is equally *lawful*. God calls them both *wives* (for so the word אִשָּׁה must be rendered in this place, as the context shews plainly) and He can't be mistaken, if He *calls them so* they certainly *were so*. If the *second* wife bore the first son, that son was to inherit before a son born afterwards of the *first* wife. Here the issue is expressly deemed *legitimate*, and inheritable to the *double portion of the first-born*; which could not be, if the *second* marriage were not deemed as lawful and valid as the *first*.

The *wisdom of this world*, as at present constituted, would say—the man was an *adulterer*—the *second* wife an *adulteress*—our law would make the man a *felon*—our *ecclesiastical* courts would pronounce the *second* marriage *null* and *void*—the issue would be *bastardized*—and our *devout* people would lift up their hands and eyes, and deem the whole a monstrous piece of wickedness! Which view of the matter is most agreeable to the *mind* and *will* of God, must be left to the *judicious* reader to determine.

But farther. To say that *polygamy* is sinful (for if it ever *was* it certainly *is*, and if ever it *was not* it certainly *is not*, unless some positive law hath made an alteration,



or unless good and evil change their nature by length of time, like the fashion of our cloaths) is to make God the *author of sin*; for not to \* forbid that which is evil, but even to countenance and promote it, is being so far the *author* of it, and accessory to it in the highest degree. — And shall we dare to *say*, or even to *think*, that this is chargeable on HIM who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and who cannot look on iniquity? Hab. i. 13. God forbid!

When HE is upbraiding DAVID, by the prophet *Nathan*, for his ingratitude towards His *Almighty benefactor*, (2 Sam. xii.) He does it in the following terms: ver. 8. I GAVE † THEE *thy master's house*, and

\* *Puffendorf*, b. vi. c. 1. § 16. observes, that “the *Mosaical* law was so far from forbidding this custom, that it seems in several places to suppose it;” and refers to Deut. xxi. 15. xvii. 16, 17. and 2 Sam. xii. 8.

† When *Esau* met *Jacob* with his wives and children, he asked—*who are those with thee?* and *Jacob* said—*The children which GOD hath GRACIOUSLY GIVEN thy servant.* Gen. xxxiii. 5. Now, can we suppose that GOD's *gracious gifts* are bestowed on acts of rebellion against His positive laws? Yet we must either suppose this, or that *Jacob's polygamy* was no transgression of the law.—See Gen. xxx. 16, 17, 18, another remarkable instance of GOD's special blessing on *polygamy*.

The mention of *Esau* reminds me of a remarkable part of his history. He took *two wives*, both *Hittites*,

and thy MASTER'S WIVES INTO THY BOSOM, and I gave thee the house of Is-

tites, idolatresses—which were a grief of mind unto Isaac, and to Rebekah. Gen. xxvi. 34, 35. But whence arose this grief of mind in Esau's parents? Not on account of his polygamy, but because he had married heathen women, as is clear from xxvii. 46: therefore Jacob is sent to Padan-Aram, that he might not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, but of his mother's family; and when Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father, he went and took a wife of the daughters of Ishmael, unto the wives which he had—but we hear of no lamentation of Isaac and Rebekah over this fresh act of polygamy. As for Jacob, we read of his return out of Syria with no less than four wives—that when he came to Mahanaim, and heard of Esau's approach, he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women-servants (called also his wives—See Gen. xxx. 4, 9.) and his eleven sons, and passed over the brook Jabbok. Gen. xxxii. 22. And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him, &c. This man is called אֱלֹהִים ver. 30. GOD.; in Hof. xii. 4. מַלְאָךְ an angel; and ver. 5. the Lord God of Hosts—which, all put together, shews us, that it was not a mere man, nor created angel, but מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה the angel JEHOVAH—the messenger of the covenant, Mal. iii. 1. who appeared often in an human form under the Old Testament, in token of His future incarnation under the New Testament, even the man, the GOD-man, CHRIST JESUS—He who is represented by commentators as ranking polygamy with adultery, Matt. xix. 9. But what was his conduct towards Jacob?—Doth He reprove him for the sin of polygamy, in which he was living? No—He said, Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with GOD and with men, and hast prevailed—and he BLESSED him there. Comp. Deut. xxvii. 26. and Gal. iii. 10.

RAEL and JUDAH, and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given thee such and such things.

Can we suppose God giving more wives than one into DAVID's bosom, who already had more than one, if it was sin in DAVID to take them? Can we imagine that God should thus transgress (as it were) His own commandment in one instance, and yet so severely reprove and chastise DAVID for breaking it in another? Is it not rather plain, from the whole transaction, that DAVID committed mortal sin in taking another living man's wife, but none in taking the widows of the deceased SAUL? that therefore, though the law of God condemned the first, yet it did not condemn the second?

This passage of 2 Sam. xii. 8. is so conclusive a proof of God's allowance of polygamy, that writers on the other side of the question have not been able to get rid of it, but by a downright corruption of the text. Instead of the plain, obvious, and literal meaning of the word חֵיק which signifies the "breast or bosom," "from the throat to the pit of the stomach," have construed it into power, and would tell us that "God gave SAUL's wives into DAVID's power as a sovereign, not into his bosom as an husband."

"Take



“ Take this expression in its strongest  
 “ and most strict sense” (says the late re-  
 verend and learned *Dean Delaney*, in a  
 book called “*Reflections on Polygamy*,”  
 printed at London, 1737, under the  
 name of *Phileleutherus Dubliniensis*) “ as  
 “ where *Sarai* tells *Abram* that she had  
 “ given her maid into his bosom, (Gen. xvi.  
 “ 5.) what more can be meant by it,  
 “ than that she gave her into his power?”  
 We have but to look at the whole con-  
 text of that passage, and this learned  
 man’s question receives a full and explicit  
 answer, and his whole argument an absolute  
 refutation. Gen. xvi. 1. &c. Now SARAI,  
 ABRAM’S wife, bare him no children, and she  
 had an handmaid, an ÆGYPTIAN, whose  
 name was HAGAR; and SARAI said unto  
 ABRAM, Behold now the LORD hath re-  
 strained me from bearing, I pray thee GO \*  
 IN UNTO MY MAID, it may be that I  
 may

\* The sequel of this chapter seems to afford, to  
 every candid mind, a very conclusive proof, that  
 this proposal of polygamy to *Abram* by his wife *Sarai*,  
 was not sinful, neither *Abram*’s complying with it  
 in the least displeasing to GOD; for on *Hagar*’s de-  
 parture from *Sarai*, on account of hard usage, ver. 6.  
 the angel of the LORD recommends it to her to re-  
 turn, and promises to multiply her seed exceedingly,  
 that it should not be numbered for multitude—tells her  
 she should bear a son—בן—which promise was ful-  
 filled,

may OBTAIN CHILDREN BY HER. *And ABRAM bearkened unto the voice of SARAI: and SARAI, ABRAM's wife, took HAGAR her maid, the Ægyptian, and gave her to ABRAM to be HIS WIFE (לְאִשָּׁה) and he WENT IN UNTO HAGAR, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes: and SARAI said unto ABRAM, My wrong be upon thee; I HAVE GIVEN MY MAID INTO THY BOSOM, and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes; the LORD judge between me and thee.* This scripture is too plain to need any comment. I will therefore, after observing that קִיץ no more signifies *power*, than it signifies an *horse*, only add, that if SAUL's wives had not been given into DAVID's bosom, in the plain and \* usual sense of that expression, the circumstance itself could not have afforded that striking aggravation, so beautifully intimated in Nathan's parable, of the rich man's sparing

filled, ver. 15. Now for all this to happen, in support of, and as a blessing upon, a polygamous marriage, if such marriages were *sinful*, and of course abominable in the eyes of GOD, is, I freely own, past every notion which I have conceived of the scripture-character of the holy GOD of Israel. See Gen. xvii. 20.

\* Deut. xiii. 6. אִשְׁתְּ דִּיקָךְ *Uxor sinus tui.* Mont. *The wife of thy bosom.*

*to take of his own flock, and his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but taking the poor man's lamb, &c.*

The learned *Dean*, as well as some other commentators on this famous passage, go still farther, and tell us, *DAVID* could not enjoy these widows of *SAUL* as *wives*, because in so doing he would have committed *incest*, they being *mothers-in-law* to *MICHAL*, *SAUL*'s daughter, who was *DAVID*'s wife. But where is such an union forbidden? I have carefully examined the degrees of *affinity* and *consanguinity* wherein marriage is forbidden, and do find a man must not marry his *own mother-in-law*, (*Lev. xviii. 8.*) but as to his *wife's mother-in-law*, there is not a trace of such an impediment. As for *MICHAL*'s *own mother*, she, if living, must be put out of the question. See *Lev. xviii. 17.*

These things being considered, the observations of such commentators evaporate into just what *NATHAN*'s parable and remonstrance must do, supposing such criticisms to be true; that is to say, into—nothing at all. *DAVID*'s ingratitude to *GOD*, and to his \* *WORTHY URIAH*—

\* 2 Sam. xxiii. 39.



were not so marked by NATHAN, because DAVID had a number of women whom he could *not enjoy*; but because he might have *enjoyed* them whenever he pleased: therefore his taking URIAH's *wife* was the more inexcusable, and his rebellious ingratitude against GOD, who gave him so many women *into his bosom*, the more aggravated.

These truths have not failed universally in their influence, but have forced themselves into the consciences of some; who, not being able to resist their conviction, have confessed that "*Polygamy*" "*was allowed of GOD to the Jews*, but yet "*it is \* forbidden to Christians*"—which is just as true as if it was said, that "*the*" "*people under the Old Testament were*" "*men and women*, but *Christians † are*" "*not*;"

\* *Polygamy* is prohibited among *Christians*, but was allowed, by *Divine appointment*, among the *Jews*. Chambers, Tit, *Polygamy*.

† Or to say with *some of the* antient fathers, who were *wiser* than the scriptures, that the *crescite & multiplicamini* of the Old Testament has nothing to do with *Christians* under the New Testament—*Quia hodie, repleto mundo, non tam necessarium quam olim*; and again—*hoc dictum pertinere ad tempora ante Christum, non ad nos qui alio vivimus ævo—mundum jam non desiderare illud crescite & multiplicamini*. "The command—*Be fruitful and multiply*, &c. is not necessary, as once it was," "*because*

“not;” for to suppose that the *human species* is changed, is not more absurd, than to suppose a change either of the *original* design of God in the institution of marriage, or of the sense and meaning of the *seventh* commandment, as forbidding or condemning that *now*, which was not forbidden or condemned, either by the one or the other, for so many ages *before*. As for the positive law of the *seventh* commandment, it is attended with such pains and penalties in the breach of it, that it is impossible but that some instance of God’s disapprobation of *polygamy* must have been met with, had that been within the meaning of it; otherwise the absurdity must follow, of supposing a suspension of this law for 1500 years after it was ordained of God, delivered to *Moses*, and by him to the people at *Mount Sinai*—and all this for the indulgence of *mortal sin* in *one* sex, while it was punished with death in the other.

In the first place, I would observe in general, that *polygamy*, in its proper sense, as practised under the Old Testament by the people of God; that is, the taking

“because the world is filled with people.—That  
 “belonged to the times before CHRIST, not to us  
 “who live in another age—the world now wants  
 “not that—*Increase and multiply.*”

*two wives together at once, or one to another, and cohabiting with both*, is not so much as \* mentioned any where, that I can find, from the *first* chapter of *Saint Matthew* to the *last* of the *Revelation* of *Saint John*, inclusive: therefore it cannot be said to be † *condemned*. The famous passage in *Matt. xix.* which has been already considered, and will be more fully hereafter, certainly relates to ‡ *divorce*, and, properly speaking, not to *polygamy*; for this, simply considered, does not come in question. The people there, so far from intending *polygamy*, meant nothing less, for they meant to have but *one wife at a time*; else why were they for *divorcing one*, in order to take || *another*? Their sin was this, not the *taking*

\* Unless incidentally, 1 Tim. iii. 2. 1 Tit. i. 6. where nothing is said, either good or bad, as to the matter itself.

† Judge *Blackstone* says, very gravely—Comm. vol. i. p. 436. “*Polygamy* is condemned by the law “ of the *New Testament*.”

‡ So our *translators* undoubtedly thought; for in the summary of the contents printed at the head of the *chapter*, they only say—“*CHRIST* answereth the “ *Pharisees* concerning *divorcement*.” ver. 3—10. So *Mark* x. 2. “*Touching divorcement*.”

|| Here the word *ἄλλῃ*, *Matt. xix. 9.* is supposed to signify *another* (i. e. *any other woman*) according to our translation. But that this may not be the sense of it, see after.

and



and *cobabiting* with *more than one* at a time. They imagined themselves *totally free* from the *first*, before they married the *second*.

The New Testament was not to introduce a *new law* concerning this, nor any thing else. Nothing is to be found there which was not in the Old Testament, only as to the *manner*; the *matter* is one and the same. Otherwise, how could *Paul* derive any strength to his argument, Gal. iii. 10. by citing the sanction of the *old law*, to prove the necessity of *salvation by grace*? If the law be in a single instance altered, or changed in one single point, how can it be said by an inspired *apostle* of CHRIST—*Cursed is every one that continueth not in ALL THINGS which are written in the book of the law to do them?*—which, as it never had, so it never can have but one sense and meaning; and our LORD shews, that it not only condemned the *act*, but the very *thought* of *adultery*. Did it only begin to do this, when CHRIST said, *Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart?* Matt. v. 28. (but then this must mean such a woman \* as *adultery* could be committed

\* The word *fovn*, like the Hebrew אשה is certainly a general term, and signifies a *woman*, as distinguished

committed with, supposing the *thought* brought forth into *act*). And does not the Old Testament say the same thing? What

tinguished from a man; and in this sense it is used Matt. xiv. 21. Acts v. 14. & al freq.

But this cannot be the sense of it here; for if it be sinful to *look with desire* on any *woman* whatsoever, then it would be sinful for a man to *desire* his own wife, to whom he is actually married, or a virgin to whom he is contracted; and this would lead us into all the absurdities of the antient *misogamists*, who held *marriage itself* to be *sinful*.

In this place, therefore, it certainly means a *woman* considered as *related to a man*; and that, whether *betroted* or *espoused* only (See Matt. i. 20, 24. Luke ii. 5.) or that hath cohabited with her husband, (Luke i. 5, 13, 18.) for with no other can *adultery* be committed; and it is very evident that *our Saviour's* discourse is on that subject; as forbidden and condemned by the *seventh commandment*, which He is explaining.

*Ἰὺν* in the New Testament, like *ἡὺν* also in the Old Testament, is the term made use of to denote a *married woman*—when *others* are designed, we meet with *ἡρασιὸν*, a damsel, Fr. *demoiselle*—*παρθενὸς*, a virgin—*χρηά*, a widow—but I believe it would be difficult to find a single passage in the New Testament, where *ἡὺν* is used necessarily to denote an *unmarried woman*. *μεμέρισαι ἡ ἡὺν καὶ ἡ παρθενὸς*, 1 Cor. vii. 34. Afterwards the *παρθενὸς* is called *ἀγαμέ*—the *ἡὺν*, *ἡαμνοῦσα*.

For want of such distinction, some *commentators*, by letting their *own* imaginations loose, have filled those of many *readers* with matter of sore distress and bondage of conscience, as if the *desire* after any *female* whatsoever, came within what they call the *spiritual* import of the *seventh commandment*.

I once

What else is the meaning of the *tenth* commandment, which says, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife?* or of Prov.

xxiv. 9.

I once knew a gentleman, who often assured me, that he never approached *his own wife*, without finding a secret uneasiness in his mind, lest he was doing wrong. He was a great admirer of what are called *spiritual expositors*. These are, too often, a species of *commentators*, who, neglecting the scriptural sense and meaning of the *original*, wander into every conceit which a warm, or perhaps a wild imagination may suggest, from the sound of words in a translation. Some instances of this have been given in this work, and as many more might be given, as would furnish ample materials for a work by itself.

Such people there always were.—We read of a sect of *Pharisees*, who were called *Talpa* or *Moles*, because they walked about with their eyes shut or blindfolded, lest they should behold a woman; and, says my author—*sæpe in muros impeerint & sanguis profusus fuerit*—"They often got bloody noses by running against walls." See Christoph. Gerson, in Talmud. p. 24.

We are told of a *Jesuit*, called *Alphonsus Rodicius*, who, though he served at the mass 44 years, and had given absolution to thousands, had never beheld the face of a woman in all that time. General. Mar. 31 Oct. p. 577.

Another was so *pious*, and so avoided the sight of all women, that he would not even see his *own mother*. Ib.—To what does this amount?—A delusion of the Devil—an arraignment of the wisdom and holiness of the CREATOR in our formation, by condemning as evil, those appetites, which He hath implanted in our nature, for the purpose of incitement to marriage, and, of course, to the continuance



xxiv. 9. *The thought of foolishness is sin?*  
 The word זמה which we translate *the thought*, signifies a wicked imagination,  
*prava*

ance of the human species. To avoid such errors, one safe rule may be laid down, viz. That no *desire* is, or can be *unlawful*, but where the object of it is *unlawful* for us to possess. Let us keep to this, and then we shall not be whittling away the strong, noble, manly sense of scripture, into the ridiculous whims and fancies of visionaries and enthusiasts.

Notwithstanding the length of this note, I cannot help taking notice of a text, which is supposed to be the ground of the *Talpæan* austerity above-mentioned, and which is as likely to be abused to the purposes of *self-righteousness*, as that of Matt. v. 28. It is that of Job xxxi. 1. *I made a covenant with mine eyes, why then should I think upon a maid?* Job is asserting his integrity with respect to many circumstances of his life and conversation, and among the rest, with regard to fleshly incontinence; and this chapter begins with—*I have made a covenant with mine eyes.*—ומה אתבונן על בתולה—*Et quid considerabo in virgine.* Mont. Our translation is near enough the original, to give us the sense of it; however, that *sense* must be interpreted according to the analogy of the *divine law*, and not according to the mere *sound* of the words; for Job (ver. 2, 3.) shews us, that he means to express a very grievous offence, such as excludes from *all portion of God*, and *inheritance in the kingdom of heaven* (Comp. 1 Cor. vi. 9.) and which bringeth *destruction on workers of such iniquity*. This is sufficient to make it impossible that Job can speak the truth, if nothing more is meant than is literally expressed. In the first place, Job had made no such covenant, &c. *as not to think on a maid*, for he had married one. Secondly, this can be no sin, simply considered in itself; for if so,  
 men

*prava aut mala cogitatio.* Mont.—an evil thought. The law is spiritual, says Paul, I had not known lust (i. e. known it to be evil) except the law had said, Thou shalt not

men must plunge into sin, or there must be an end of the world; which but ill agrees with—INCREASE and multiply, &c.

Some have therefore construed this to mean, that Job was content with one wife, and verged not towards concubinage or polygamy.—Neither of these were forbidden or condemned by the law, but, as has been shewn at large, practised openly by the greatest saints, and allowed and blessed of God; therefore cannot answer to ver. 2, 3.

For which reasons, this text is very difficult to interpret, agreeably to the analogy of faith, unless the word בתולה *maid*, or *virgin*, be taken here, for what it certainly imports elsewhere, בתולה ארשה—*virgo desponsata*—a betrothed or espoused virgin, who still was called בתולה. See Joel. i. 8. and perhaps Jer. ii. 32. Comp. Is. lxi. 10. latter part. See Deut. xxii. 23, 24, 25.

That Job should not suffer himself to think on (i. e. so as to desire) such a one, is of a piece with what he says, ver. 9, 10, 11, 12; for such a one was, in the eye of the law, another man's wife. Deut. xxii. 23, 24. So that Job is not to be understood as making transgression where there is no law, like the *Talpa* and the *Jesuits* above-mentioned; but as protesting his innocence with respect to adultery, in every sense of the word, as not suffering himself to look on, so as to lust after, a virgin betrothed, much less to commit actual adultery, by defiling his neighbour's wife. ver. 9, 10, 11, 12.

Solomon Jarchi construes the passage very liberally indeed, or rather paraphrases it thus, viz. "I made a covenant, &c. that I would have no knowledge of any man's wife." See Chappelowe on Job, vol. i. p. 425.

*covet.*

*covet.* Rom. vii. 7. Therefore, when our *Saviour* preached on the *Mount*, He did not make, ordain, or publish any *new law*, nor did he make the law more *spiritual* than when published at *Mount Sinai*; but he set it forth, and vindicated it from the false glosses of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who, in their teaching, dwelt on the *outward* letter only, throwing a veil of obscurity over its *spiritual* sense and meaning. The *seventh* commandment was just as *spiritual* under the Old Testament as under the *New*. The very *thought* of *adultery* in *DAVID*, was as sinful as it would have been in *Saint Paul*. How then can it be imagined, that the commandment against *adultery* meant not as much in the times of *Moses* and the *prophets*, as in the days of *CHRIST* and His *Apostles*? or, in other words, as much under the Old Testament as under the *New*? How can it be thought to condemn any thing amongst *Christians*, which it did not equally condemn amongst the *Jews*? *Whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law* (whether *Jews* or *Christians*) *that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.* Rom. iii. 19. If then the law ever condemned *polygamy* as *adultery*, *whoredom*, or *fornication*,



tion, it certainly does it *now*; but, as hath been shewn, it never did condemn it in any one instance, not only *from the beginning*, by any construction put on the *original marriage-institution*, but also for 1500 years together after the giving the law at Mount Sinai; therefore it never has condemned it since: for CHRIST gave no *new* meaning to this or any other of the commandments, but only vindicated and restored the *old*. What *was* murder is *now* murder—what *was* theft is *now* theft—what *was* adultery is *now* adultery—and what *was* none of these, is still none of these.

GOD'S *law* is His *will*, and His *will* is His *law*; a change of *one* must infer a change in the *other*, and either of these a change in HIMSELF: an idea which is wholly irreconcilable with the *scripture-character* of GOD, *with whom there is no variableness, neither any shadow of turning.* James i. 17.

Men may cobble, and vamp, and alter, and repeal laws, and indeed it must be so, as mischiefs, which escape all human prescience and foresight, must daily arise; but it cannot be so with OMNISCIENCE. *All things are present and open to Him.* Heb. iv. 13. He ordained the propagation of mankind—*He blessed them,*

and said unto them, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.* Gen. i. 28. He made the woman; and brought her to the man, and said—*A man shall cleave to his wife,* Gen. ii. 22, 24. (by which expression, according to St. Paul's \* interpretation, 1 Cor. vi. 15, 16. is meant the act of copulation or marriage) and *they shall be one flesh*—thus creating between them so indissoluble a bond, as never to be divided more. Though these words were spoken immediately by ADAM, yet, doubtless, he spake under the influence of the *divine Spirit*, as may appear from CHRIST's manner of applying the words, Matt. xix. 4, 5. and may therefore, as what MOSES and the *prophets* spake under the same holy influence, be styled—"The word of God." The circumscription and regulation of the whole, was provided for by fixed, determined, and immutable laws, calculated for all times, places, and ages of the world, wherein He should be pleased to make them known. These laws, on the establishment of the church, on its deliverance out of ÆGYPT, were given to MOSES, and enforced and explained by him, and the subsequent *prophets*, under

\* See before, 19, 20, and note.

the immediate command and teaching of God; and continue, like the *holy Law-giver Himself, one and the same* for ever. Who may marry together, and who may not—what is a lawful marriage in God's account, and what is not so, was not left to the uncertain or presumptuous determinations of mankind, but immutably fixed by *written laws* of God. To these it is our bounden duty to conform, and to say to all subsequent inventions of men, as well those which forbid marriage entirely, as those who would put *asunder those whom God hath joined together*, under pretence of greater purity and holiness, as the angel did to PETER, Acts x. 15. *What God hath cleansed, that call thou not common or unclean.*

I have mentioned the law being explained by the *prophets*. These were extraordinary messengers which God raised up and sent forth under a special commission; not only to *foretell things to come*, but to *preach* to the people, to hold forth the *law*, to point out their defections from it, and to call them to repentance, under the severest terms of God's displeasure, unless they obeyed. Their commission, in these respects, we find recorded, Is. lviii. 1. *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet: shew my*



*people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.* This commission was to be faithfully executed, at the peril of the prophet's own destruction, as appears from the solemn charge given to Ezekiel, chap. iii. 18. *When I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand.*

These prophets executed their commission very unfaithfully towards God and the people, as well as most dangerously for themselves, if *polygamy* was a sin against God's law; for it was the common practice of the \* whole nation, from the prince on the throne to the lowest of the people; and yet neither ISAIAH, JEREMIAH, nor any one of the prophets, bore the least testimony against it. They reprov'd them sharply and plainly for *defiling their neighbours wives*; as Jer. v. 8; xxix. 23.—in which fifth chapter, we not only find the prophet bearing testimony against *adultery*, but against *whoredom* and *fornication*, ver. 7. for that they assembled themselves *by troops in the harlots houses*.

\* Josephus calls it *ναῖσος*—which answers to what we mean by the word *national*.

Not a word against *polygamy*. How is it possible, in any reason, to think that this, if a sin, should never be mentioned as such, by God—by Moses—or any one of the prophets?

Here I may particularly mention *Elijah* the *Tishbite*, who could with truth say of himself, 1 Kings xix. 10. קנא קנאוֹתִי *zelando zelatus sum*. Mont. Which emphatical reduplication we translate by—I have been VERY JEALOUS for the LORD OF HOSTS. This holy man was fired with zeal for God's law, and was a most faithful and undaunted reprover of sin, even to the very face of king *Ahab* (who at that time reigned in *Israel*, and was doubtless a *polygamist*, by his having seventy sons) yet not a word is said about his *polygamy*; which could hardly have been omitted, had it been a sin against either the primary law of marriage, or the seventh commandment. The same zeal which led *Elijah* to tell *Ahab*, that he and his father's house had troubled *Israel*, by forsaking the commandments of the LORD, and following *Baalim*, must surely have led him to reprove *Ahab's* *polygamy*, had that also been a forsaking the commandments of *JEHOVAH*. The scripture, 1 Kings xvi. 31, strongly remarks, as an aggravation of *Ahab's* superlative wickedness, that

that he married an *idolatress*, contrary to Deut. vii. 3. Had his *polygamy* been contrary to Exod. xx. 14. this would hardly have escaped the reproofs of the prophet *Elijah*, who did not forget *Jezebel*, and the *prophets which ate at her table*. 1 Kings xix. 19.

Although it be true, that none of the *prophets before the captivity* mention it as a *sin*, yet did not MALACHI, after the *return from the captivity*, speak of it, and in very severe terms *condemn* it? thus closing the canon of the Old Testament with a most awful reprehension of it? Mal. ii. 14, 15.

As this famous passage is taken for granted to be a condemnation of *polygamy* under the Old Testament, let us examine it, and we shall find that it does not even relate to the subject: if it did, it would be very strange, that so material a point should escape *all the prophets* that went before him, *Moses* himself not excepted. This single circumstance should make one suspicious of the common interpretation given to this portion of scripture by the general run of *commentators*, who, mistaking the *sound* of the words for the *sense* of the text, have followed one another like sheep, who keep the same track, only because others have gone before them.



them. The words, as they stand in our translation, are these—THE LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet she is thy companion and the wife of thy covenant. And did not He make one? yet hath He the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth; for the LORD GOD of ISRAEL saith, that he hateth PUTTING AWAY.

The last words are a key to the rest, and shew, that the instance in which they dealt treacherously with their wives, was putting them away; and this, in order to take heathen women in their room. This is manifest from ver. ii. JUDAH hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in ISRAEL and JERUSALEM; for JUDAH hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

EZRA \*, who lived about this time, hath recorded the fact at large, and fully explains the matter; chap. ix. 1. The people of ISRAEL and the priests have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, for they have taken of their daughters

\* See also Nehemiah xiii. 23—29.

for themselves, and for their sons, and the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands.

Ver. 10. And now, O LORD, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land which ye go to possess is an unclean land, &c.

Ver. 12. Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters to your sons, &c.

Chap. x. 2. We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God, to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, ver. 3.

The putting away these heathen women was a duty, and this by the positive law of God. For God having, as it were, forbidden the *banns* in exprefs words (Deut. vii. 3.) their marriages were absolutely null and void *ab initio*; they could contract no valid marriage whatsoever with them, and therefore must *put them away*. This affords us a strong proof of the *lawfulness* of *polygamy*, where the woman was not excepted against, as by the law above mentioned, or by some other: for if this were otherwise, we should hear of

of putting away all but the *first* in all cases. God would not have suffered any marriage which was contrary to the *seventh* commandment, any more than those which were contrary to *Deut. vii. 3.* When we compare EZRA and MALACHI together, we find by the *former*, that the *Jews* took *heathen* women for their wives; and by the *latter*, that they not only did this, but put away their *Israelitish* wives for *that very purpose.* This is plainly what ver. 14. calls *dealing treacherously* with their wives, their divorcing them for this *unblessed* purpose. There the *prophet* uses the like arguments against them as he had before used, ver. 10. with regard to their *dealing treacherously with their brethren* — Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? When they put away their *Jewish* wives, and married the *heathen* idolatrous women, they *profaned the covenant of their fathers*; that is, that command of God delivered to their fathers, not only in the *original* institution of marriage, which forbade putting away, but also that positive law, *Deut. vii. 3.* which forbade marriage with *heathens.* They dealt treacherously with their brethren;



*thren*; that is to say, with the *parents* and *relations* of their unjustly divorced wives, who gave them their *daughters* or *sisters* in marriage, to *abide* with them, not to be *put away*. They dealt treacherously also with their wives, in *putting them away*.—Therefore the *prophet* reproves them, and calls them to repentance by the following considerations, ver. 14, 15; which I will endeavour to lay before the reader in a paraphrase suitable to the literal and true meaning of the *original* Hebrew, and conformable to the *analogy* of divine revelation, as delivered to us by *Moses* and the *prophets*. Then it will appear, that these distinguished servants of God were not guilty of concealing, disguising, or dissembling the truth; nor God Himself capable of suffering His *seventh* commandment, as well as the *original institution of marriage*, to be transgressed, not only with impunity, but *allowance*, uniformly through so many ages, or of leaving His church and people utterly ignorant of His mind and will, touching so important a matter, for all that time.

ולא אחד עשה *Et ne unus fecit?* Mont.  
*And did not one make?* Here our commentators, misled by our translators, and these by the vulgar error of the *sinfulness* of *polygamy*, tell us, that “these words signify  
 “ God’s

“ God’s making but *one woman* at the  
 “ beginning; He had the *residue of the*  
 “ *spirit*, and therefore could have made  
 “ *more women* for ADAM if He had  
 “ pleased.” One misfortune attending  
 so ignorant a comment, is, that the word  
 אִתָּךְ cannot signify *one woman*, unless,  
 amongst other changes, *women* were of  
 the *masculine* gender under the Old Tes-  
 tament, though of the *feminine* under the  
 New Testament; for אִתָּךְ is certainly of  
 the *masculine* gender—אִתָּךְ is the *femi-*  
*nine*—See Judges ix. 53. אִתָּךְ אִשָּׁה *mu-*  
*lier una*. Mont. & al. freq. This, be-  
 sides an undue transposition of the words,  
 is, I take it, a conclusive reason for say-  
 ing they mistake the passage. It is not—  
 Did not he make One?—but—Did not One  
 \* make? like ver. 10. Have we not all  
 ONE Father? Did not ONE GOD create  
 us? “ Did not One, or THE ONE, make  
 “ both you and your *Jewish wives*? Did  
 “ He not form both of you—(see Deut.  
 “ xxxii. 6.) *naturally* of the same seed  
 “ of *Abrabam*—*spiritually* by the same  
 “ holy dispensation and ordinances?—

\* If the attentive reader will compare the אִתָּךְ  
 one, in this place with אִתָּךְ אִשָּׁה one GOD, ver. 10.  
 surely he must see, that the same *Almighty Person* is  
 meant. There he is said to *create*—here to *make*.  
 Comp. Gen. ii. 3. latter part.

“ וְשֹׁאֵר רוּחַ לֹ And *He bath* (or hath He  
 “ not?) *the remainder of the Spirit*—Hath  
 “ He not the same *power* He ever had?—  
 “ Is His hand shortened at all, so that He  
 “ cannot complete your restoration if He  
 “ pleases, or punish you still more se-  
 “ verely, if you continue disobedient to  
 “ His commandments? *Spirit* is here  
 “ used for \* *power*, mighty, but espe-  
 “ cially *irresistible power*; as Ps. cxxxix. 7.  
 “ Is. lix. 19. Is. lxiii. 14. Is. xxxiv. 16.  
 “ —וְכֵן הָאֲחֵר מִבְּקֶשׁ And what did THE  
 “ ONE seek? זֶרַע אֱלֹהִים—a *seed of God*  
 “ —an † *holy seed* (see Ezra ix. 2.)  
 “ therefore take heed to your *spirit*—that

\* So the *power* of the *Spirit* is often used for the  
*Spirit itself*. Comp. Is. xxxii. 15. Luke xxiv. 49.  
 Acts i. 8. See also Judges xiii. 25; xiv. 19; xvi.  
 17, 20. Rom. i. 4. with 1 Cor. vi. 14. & al. freq.  
 In an old edition of the *Bible*, printed in the year  
 1615, there are short notes added in the margin;  
 and in the note on the word *Spirit*, in this text, it  
 is explained to mean *power and virtue*.

† This can have nothing to do with *polygamy*,  
 because, if it had, we should have hardly found it  
*allowed of God*, and practised by his saints; or, in  
 fact, have found some of the most distinguished and  
 blessed men that ever lived, the offspring of *polyga-  
 mous* marriages; witness holy *Joseph*, and the pro-  
 phet *Samuel*. Besides all this, we may observe, that  
 the *Jews*, who are in this place of *Ezra* emphati-  
 cally styled the *holy seed*, were descended from the  
*twelve sons of Jacob*, half of which were born under  
*polygamy*.

“ is,



“ is, your *temper—affections*”—as *לחץ* is very often applied, (see Numb. xiv. 24. 1 Sam. i. 15.) “ *and none of you deal treacherously against the wife of thy youth, by putting her away, and taking these idolatresses; for I the LORD hate putting away.*” The consideration of the relation they stood in to JEHOVAH—He their *common Father*—they His professing children, was one argument against their separating—another was, that, as the LORD sought a *godly seed* in their offspring, by their being devoted to Him in their earliest infancy, then brought up in the *nurture and admonition of the LORD*, this design would be defeated by their taking *idolatrous* women, who, instead of devoting the children to JEHOVAH, would be for bringing them up to the \* *worship* of their *idols*, and an *ungodly seed* be the consequence. See Deut. vii. 3, 4. Lastly, God had forbidden *divorce* from the beginning, (see Gen. ii. 24.) for He *hateth putting away* at any rate; but how much more to see His own professing daughters *put away*, that His own pro-

\* We find that these idolatrous women laid a sure foundation for this, by bringing up their children in the knowledge of the heathen tongues of their several countries, so that they could not understand the language of God's law. See Neh. xiii. 23, 24.

selling sons might *marry the daughters of a strange God?* This was indeed doing *an abominable thing which God hated.* Jer. iv. 44.

This I take to be a clear consistent view of this famous passage, and agrees exactly with what EZRA says, chap. ix. 9. &c. and chap. x. 2. &c. who did not *rend his mantle and garment, and pluck the hair off his head and beard, and sit down astonished,* because the people did what their fathers ABRAM, JACOB, DAVID, &c. had done without the *least reproof,* and had been constantly, openly, avowedly practised by the holiest of their forefathers, without the least \* scruple on their part, or condemnation on God's part—but because they had married *heathen* women, and, as appears by Mal. ii. 14. had *dealt treacherously* against the *Jewish lawful wives, by putting them away* in order to do it.

\* When Joseph was solicited by Potiphar's wife, he answered with abhorrence—*How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Gen. xxxix. 9. latter part.—But when Abraham's wife Sarah proposed her husband's taking Hagar to wife, Gen. xvi. 2, 3. he does it without the least objection. So Jacob took Rachel after Leah, there being then no law against marrying a wife's sister. This, and the many other instances, clearly prove, that the wisest and best of God's saints never dreamt of *polygamy's* having any relation to the sin of *adultery.*

As

As to the notion expressed by *commentators*, in their apparently misconceived ideas of this text of MALACHI—that because God created but *one man* and *one woman* at first, therefore he intended that “no man should have more than one wife at a time ever after,” I do humbly conceive, that, if God had *meant* so, He would somewhere have *said* so, and not have left it to the wisdom of men to put their \* interpretations on what He was pleased

\* As to putting our construction on any acts of God, so as to draw them into *precedents*, unless clearly instructed by Him so to do, it would in many cases be attended with great mischiefs—for instance: Suppose we were to argue for *brothers* and *sisters* intermarrying, because this must have been the case among the immediate children of *Adam and Eve*? the creation of only *one man* and *one woman*, would at least be as good an argument for incest, as *against* polygamy. But it can have no weight in either case, because God, by a positive law, (Lev. xviii. 9.) prohibited the *first*, and by as positive a law (Deut. xxi. 15—17.) allowed the *second*. It pleased God, that the whole *human nature* should reside in one common *federal head*, who was to be the common *representative* of all his subsequent naturally-engendered offspring; and by *one woman* taken out of *himself*, to convey that nature which was in him to his own immediate children, and by them to his posterity, to the end of the world. Let any one read *Rom. v.* with attention, and consider in what respects *Adam* was a *figure of Him that was to come* (ver. 14.) and then it will be seen, that no man who ever *was*, or *will be* naturally engendered of the offspring of *Adam*, can have been, or be in the same



pleased to do; for *who hath known the mind of the LORD, and who hath been his counsellor?* Rom. xi. 34. Some may argue, that because it was said — “*A man shall cleave to his wife, not wives, therefore it is unlawful for a man to have two or more wives in \* succession, and can only have one so long as he lives, because Adam had but one.*” This sort of conceits is like supposing that God forbid the wearing cloth, or silk, or linen, because He *cloathed* our first parents *with skins*. Gen. iii. 21; or supposing, like those mad *heretics* of the *second* century, who called themselves *Adamites*, that *Christians* are to meet together stark *naked* without any *shame*, because it is said (Gen. ii. 25.) ADAM and EVE *were naked, and were not ashamed*. If we take upon ourselves to interpret this or any act of God merely by our imaginations, we take upon us what same circumstances and situation that *Adam* was. Wherefore a precedent against *polygamy* is no more to be drawn from him, than against natural generation from *Eve’s* being made out of *one of his ribs*, or from his own being immediately formed out of the *dust of the earth*.

\* There was a time in the *Christian* church, when this was looked upon as only “a more specious and “decorous kind of *adultery*,” and reckoned *infamous*. The *Montanists* affirmed second marriages to be as *scandalous* and *sinful* as *fornication*. But more of this hereafter.

does

does not belong to us. We are told, Deut. xxix. 29. SECRET THINGS *belong unto the LORD our GOD, but those things which are REVEALED, to us and our children for ever, that we may do all the words of His law.*

That GOD might have created 10,000 men, and as many women, is certain. Why He did not, He hath no where told us, any more than why He created only *one man* and *one \* woman*. This and all things else are to be resolved into His *own good pleasure, and the counsel of his own will.* Eph. i. 11. Rev. iv. 11. Our attempting to account for any of His holy acts or dispensations, any farther than the

\* *Milton* represents *Adam* as saying—

—————O why did God,  
Creator wise, that peopled highest heav'n  
With spirits masculine, create at last  
This novelty on earth, this fair defect  
Of Nature, and not fill the world at once  
With men as angels without feminine,  
Or find some other way to generate  
Mankind? Par. Lost, B. 10.

We may presume that GOD made the rest of the animal creation by *pairs*, the *male and female*—Comp. Gen. i. 20—25. with Gen. vii. 14—16: therefore, to draw arguments against *polygamy* (which, by the way, the scriptures have no where done) from a similar creation of the human species, would, if pursued to the utmost, prove *too much*, and of course prove *nothing*.

revelation of His word expressly authorizes us, is to be wise *above what is written*, to involve ourselves in endless mazes of error, till—*professing ourselves wise, we become fools*. Rom. i. 22.

GOD's bringing the woman to the man—that solemn denunciation—*therefore shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh*—form a conclusive argument against divorce; and are expressly made use of by CHRIST for that purpose in His dispute with the Pharisees, Matt. xix. 4, 5; but it is no where, in the whole scripture, made use of as an argument against polygamy. There were, doubtless, opportunities enough in the *antediluvian*, as well as the *postdiluvian* world, to have given occasion for it, had any \* such thing been intended.

The

\* One weighty reason for the creation of only *one man and one woman* at first, may be gathered from Acts xvii. 26. where it is said—*He hath made of ONE BLOOD all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth*. Had more men and women than Adam and Eve been created at first, this strict affinity of relationship by blood could not have existed; but this was wisely and graciously contrived, as a reason for, and cement of, brotherly love—as a means of hiding pride, and boasting of one above another, with respect to their original pedigree; so that none, on this account, should despise or set at



The first instance of *polygamy* which is recorded, we find Gen. iv. 19. *And LAMECH took unto him two wives, the name of one was ADAH, the other ZILLAH.* Here our commentators think they have found out the *sin* of *polygamy*—"It was  
 "one of the degenerate race of Cain,"  
 saith one, "that first transgressed the law  
 "of marriage, that *two only* should be  
 "one flesh." These are the words of  
 one of the wisest and best (Mr. Henry)  
 amongst our *English* commentators, and

nought his brother. This thought is well expressed  
 in that well-known epitaph:

Nobles and heralds, by your leave,  
 Here lie the bones of *Matthew Prior*,  
 The son of *Adam* and of *Eve*,—  
 Let *Bourbon* or *Nassau* go higher!

Although, in this corrupt and mixed state of  
 things, civil government is necessary, therefore out-  
 ward distinctions of men are necessary; for without  
 these no civil polity could exist; yet, *in that day*,  
 when the *governors* and *governed* shall appear before  
 the *Great Governor of all*, they will be constrained  
 to say, with *Joseph's* brethen, Gen. xlii. 11. *we*  
*are all one man's sons*;—and then will know, however  
 little attention they may give to it now, that God is  
*no respecter of persons*. See Acts x. 34. If these  
 humbling considerations were improved as they  
 ought, they would furnish us with motives of hu-  
 mility, benevolence, brotherly kindness, long-suf-  
 fering, mercy, and charity to each other, beyond  
 all the arguments of the wisest moralists of *Greece*  
 and *Rome*. See Mal. ii. 10.

serve to shew how far men will go to support a popular notion, or pre-conceived opinion, even to the *corrupting of the Bible*. There are no such words as “*two only*” in the law of marriage referred to.—It stands, Gen. ii. 24. *they shall be one flesh*; and, as mentioned by CHRIST, Matt. xix. 5. *οἱ δύο—they twain shall be one flesh*. So Mark x. 8. Had the words “*two only*” been there, we should not have read so frequently afterwards of GOD’s countenancing, or His saints practising *polygamy*, any more than of His countenancing, and *their* practising *adultery*. I must here take notice of our LORD’s introduction of the words *οἱ δύο—they twain*, or *the twain*—which certainly was not done as an *addition* to the original words, or as an *interpolation*, in order to introduce some *new doctrine*, but merely as a sort of *paraphrase* to explain their import, sense, and meaning—that a *man* and *his wife*, though before marriage they were *two*—that is separate, unconnected, independent of each other, so that they might or might not come together, yet afterwards they are *no more two*, separate, unconnected, independent persons, but as *one flesh*, *εἰς σάρκα μίαν*.—The words *οἱ δύο—the twain*—are not to be taken in their

their *numerical* \* *sense*, for if they be, what follows ver. 6.—*so that they are no more twain*—would not be true; for certainly a man and woman are as much *numerically* two *after* marriage, as they are *before* it, and therefore cannot be *numerically* one; but in the same sense in which they were spoken of as *two* before, they now become *one*, that is to say, in consideration of law.

The marriage destroys their unconnectedness, distinctness, and independency on each other, so that in all *legal* consideration they are *no more twain, but one flesh*. Therefore the consequence is proved which our blessed LORD meant to prove—it could not be *lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause, or for any cause except one*, which, of itself, divided their persons again, and amounted to a total dissolution of the marriage-bond: for to make a man live with an *adulteress*, would be to make him father other people's children, defeat his own rightful heirs, and introduce that confusion into his family, which it was one grand object of

\* *Non unitas essentialis, sed unio seu conjunctio mystica vel conjugal is describitur.*—Nold. Part. Edit. Timp. 750. “Not an *essential* unity, but an *union* “or *conjunction* *mystical* or *conjugal* is described,” Matt. xix. 5, 6. Mark x. 8.



the *seventh* commandment to prevent. For want of considering the words *οἱ δύο*—*they twain*, or *the twain*—in the *legal* sense above-mentioned, our commentators have jingled them in their fancies, till they have blundered into their *two only*—*two and no more*: thus interpolating and corrupting the words of the marriage-institution, as it stands recorded Gen. ii. 24. and what is worse still, making our *blest Saviour* do the same, by representing Him as using the words in their *numerical* sense. This stamps untruth, nay, downright nonsense on what He says, ver. 6; for it is not true that a *man and his wife* are no more (*numerically*) *two*; and to say that persons, who are *numerically two*, are yet *numerically one*, is downright nonsense. As the word *twain* is to be understood in a *legal* sense, so *they shall be one flesh*, cannot be understood in a *literal* sense, as if by a kind of matrimonial *transubstantiation* they became literally *one body* (see 1 Cor. vi. 16); but that they are so in a *legal* sense is very certain; and therefore, as a man cannot separate his *bones* from his *flesh*, nor his *flesh* from his *bones*, without destroying himself, so neither can a man *put away his wife* unjustly (who, in estimation of God's law, is *bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh*) without offending  
against

against the holiness, and destroying the positive obligation of the marriage-institution.

Those, who by the legerdemain of this same *numerical* interpretation of the word *twain*, added to the *sound* of the former clause of ver. 9. make CHRIST condemn *polygamy* as *adultery*, represent Him as using the word *adultery*—in an unauthorized unconformity to the *Hebrew* scripture (as our LORD doubtless spake in *Hebrew*); for no where is that word used, to denote a man who had one wife, *taking another to her, and cohabiting with both* (which I take to be the true and genuine notion of *polygamy*); nor is it used in any other sense, but to denote the *defilement of a married woman*. OUR SAVIOUR, who constantly appealed to the *Hebrew* scriptures for what he delivered to the people, can hardly be supposed to have advanced a doctrine so unsupported by *them*; and *that* before an audience of those very *Pharisees*, who we are told, Luke xi. 54. *were laying wait for him, seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him*. Again—by making CHRIST declare *polygamy* to be *adultery*, they charge Him with asserting a falsehood, both in point of *law* and *fact*, by declaring all such *after-taken women*

not to be the real *wives* of the men who took them; for if they were, *adultery* must be out of the question. Let us examine this on the footing of scripture. It is said, 1 Sam. xxv. 42, 43, ABIGAIL became DAVID's wife, and DAVID also took AHINOAM of JEZREEL, and they were also both of them his wives. So witnesseth the Holy Ghost, and this, tho' ver. 44. tells us, he had at that very time another wife living. By saying they were also both of them his wives (for that must be the meaning of נָשִׁים in this context) it is making each one flesh with Him, so that he could not divorce either; and if either had gone to another man, she would have been an *adulteress*, and the man who took her would have been an *adulterer*. I say this, taking it for granted that the Holy Ghost would not have called them his wives, לוֹ לְנָשִׁים—*sibi in uxores*. Mont. unless they really were so.

Thus, on the authority of the Hebrew scripture, an *after-taken* woman is as much a man's wife who takes her, as the *first* is—therefore it is neither true in point of law or fact, that a man having one wife, and taking another, committeth *adultery*; for which reason it is impossible CHRIST should ever say so, and those who make Him say so, wrest His words from their true meaning.—But as this portion of scripture



ture will necessarily fall under farther consideration hereafter, I will now return to the history of LAMECH.

Whether he did right or wrong does not appear, for it is only said—LAMECH took him two wives. His being “of the degenerate race of CAIN” made it not a jot the worse, or a tittle the better, any more than the same thing done by JACOB made it either the one or the other, because he was “of the blessed race of SETH.” The invention of *music*, which was afterwards made such considerable use of in the temple of GOD—of *agriculture* and the *care of cattle*—of *working in brass and iron*, were all found out by LAMECH’s children; yet I cannot conceive that they are the less innocent in themselves, or less useful to mankind, than if they had been found out by ABRAHAM, ISAAC, and JACOB. We can only say of such observations on scripture, that they are very *filly*; but if the word of GOD is to be corrupted, in order to serve as a foundation for them, they are very *wicked*. See Deut. iv. 2. xii. 32. I only mention Mr. Henry, but I might name others; one who goes so far in corrupting the text, that he represents it as the command of GOD, that “two, and no more, should be one flesh, Gen. ii. 24.” The words

words simply are *והיו לבשר אחד*—*Et erunt in carnem unam.* *Καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν.* Matt. xix. 5. *They twain shall be one flesh.* The words *ἔσονται οἱ δύο*—*they two shall be, &c.*—relate to the *man* and his *wife*, mentioned in the same verse, and answer to the *והיו* Gen. ii. 24. which signifies *they shall be*—meaning the *איש* and *אשתו* the *man* and his *wife*, Gen. ii. 24. So that though here be a small variation between *they shall be*, and *they twain shall be*, yet it is merely verbal in point of quotation; the *sense* is just the same, whether, speaking of a man and woman, we say—*they*, or—*they twain*: but adding the word *only*, or *they two and no more*, is a very material alteration, so material, as to alter the whole sense of the passage, and to make every *polygamist* that ever lived, an offender against the original *institution of marriage*. Rather than fail in this, even the learned *Beza* himself will condescend to talk nonsense. On 1 Cor. vii. 16. where the *apostle* cites our LORD's words—*Two shall be one flesh*—"this *οἱ δύο*," says he, "is not mentioned by *Moses*, but "is rightly added, as well in this place "as in Matt. xix. 5. and Mark x. 8. "because there is only mention made of "a man and of *one wife*, but not of "wives; nor is it true that a *polygamist* "is

“ is *one* with each of his several wives,  
 “ when he is rather *divided into as many*  
 “ *parts as he has wives.*” Though this  
 learned man represents a *polygamist* as  
*Judges xix. 29.* represents the *Levite's*  
*concubine*, whom *he divided, together with*  
*her bones, into twelve parts, and sent her*  
*into all the coasts of ISRAEL*, yet the *poly-*  
*gamists* which we read of in scripture  
 were as *entire* individuals, in a *moral* as  
 well as a *natural* sense, as those who had  
 but *one wife*; otherwise each woman could  
 not have called the man *her husband*,  
*1 Sam. i. 8, 22.* nor could each woman  
 be called *his wife*, *ver. 2.* Now what-  
 ever parties, being united, in God's ac-  
 count are *man* and *wife*, they are also *one*  
*flesh*, therefore it is true, “ that a *polyga-*  
 “ *mist* is *one* with each \* of his several

“ *wives*”—that is to say, in the *legal* sense  
 above-mentioned; nor can all the rea-  
 sonings of men prove them otherwise,  
 'till they can prove themselves wiser than  
 He is who declares them to be so. And  
 I do verily believe, that if a man had *se-*  
*duced* any wife of a *polygamist*, and had

\* Even as CHRIST, the *husband of the church*  
 (Comp. *Is. liv. 5.* with *2 Cor. xi. 2.*) is as really  
*one* with every *several* believer, as with the whole  
 church collectively; or as the *head* is *one* with *each*  
 and *all* the members of the body. See post.

been



been arraigned before the judges of *Israel* on that statute, Deut. xxii. 22. *he* must, as well as the *woman*, have been condemned to die, notwithstanding what *Beza* has said, or what all the reasoners in the world could have said on the subject of *polygamy*, in *arrest* of judgment.

But there is a text in the Old Testament, which is looked upon by some to be a direct forbiddance of *polygamy*; for it stands in the *margin* of our Bibles—*Thou shalt not take one wife to another*. If this be right rendering of the *Hebrew*, then the saints of old time sinned against *light*, *knowledge*, and *law* \* with a witness! But it is translated in the text—*Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, in*

\* *Ipfos quoque Judæos hanc legem de polygamia haud accepisse, perpetua consuetudo plures sibi ex hac gente jungentium uxores ostendit. Non autem videntur tanto impetu per vetitum nefas ruisse, præcipue legis divinæ cætera studiosissimi, si expresso hujusmodi mandato hac de re cautum fuisset.* Tympius in Nold. p. 30, note 1.

“ That the *Jews* themselves did not understand  
 “ this law as concerning *polygamy*, their constant  
 “ practice of marrying a plurality of wives demon-  
 “ strates; for it is not probable that they should  
 “ have rushed with such violence into prohibited  
 “ wickedness, especially those who were most ob-  
 “ servant of the divine law in all other respects,  
 “ if cautioned against it by so express a command-  
 “ ment,”

need

*her life-time.* Lev. xviii. 18. First, I would observe, that the marginal reading —“*one wife to another*”—disunites entirely the 18th verse from the preceding context to which it belongs; this only treats of marriages which are unlawful with respect to *affinity* and *consanguinity*. The *brother's wife* had there been spoken of, ver. 16; here, most naturally, as a necessary part of the prohibition of *incest*, the *wife's sister*. Secondly, This rendering of the text is agreeable to the grammatical sense of the *Hebrew*, which the other is not. This is demonstrably shewn in *Tympius's* note on Lev. xviii. 18. in *Noldius*, Heb. Part. חשׁה p. 30. But as I find the meaning of this important passage better explained by the learned *Bishop Patrick* on the place, than I can express it in any words of my own, I will transcribe the *Bishop's* note as it stands:

“ There are a great many eminent  
 “ writers, who, following our marginal  
 “ translation (*one wife to another*) ima-  
 “ gine that here *plurality of wives* is ex-  
 “ pressly forbidden by God, and they  
 “ think there is an example to justify  
 “ this translation, *Exod. xxvi. 3.* where  
 “ *Moses* is commanded to take care that  
 “ the *five curtains* of the tabernacle were  
 “ coupled together, *one to its sister*, as  
 “ the

“ the *Hebrew* phrase is, meaning *one to*  
 “ *another*; which, if it were true, would  
 “ solve several difficulties: but there are  
 “ such reasons against it, as that I cannot  
 “ think it to be the meaning. For as  
 “ *more wives than one* were indulged *be-*  
 “ *fore* the law, so they were *after*. And  
 “ *Moses* himself supposes as much, when  
 “ he provides, a man should not prefer  
 “ a child he had by a *beloved wife*, be-  
 “ fore one he had by her whom he *hated*,  
 “ if he was the *eldest son*; which plainly  
 “ intimates an allowance in his law of  
 “ *more wives than one*.”

Here, by the good and learned *Bishop's*  
 leave, I would observe that he expresses  
 himself rather inaccurately; for by saying  
 —“ *MOSES* himself supposes as much”  
 and by calling the law, he is mention-  
 ing “*his* (*MOSES's*) law”—it looks as if  
*MOSES* was speaking by his *own* wisdom,  
 and establishing some law merely on his  
*own* authority; whereas *MOSES*, under  
 the immediate inspiration of the *Holy Ghost*  
 (*Numb. xi. 17, 25. and 2 Pet. i. 21.*) is  
 the mouth of God Himself to the peo-  
 ple; to whom He says, *Deut. iv. 5. Be-*  
*hold, I have taught you statutes and judg-*  
*ments, even as the LORD commanded me,*  
*that ye should do so in the land whither ye*  
*go to possess it.* The only instance in which



MOSES acted by his *own* authority, was in the matter of *divorces*. When our SAVIOUR is mentioning this, *Matt. xix.* he does not say—God *suffered*, but—MOSES, *because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so*; plainly intimating that *divorce* was not of GOD's ordaining, but merely of MOSES's *permission*, as an expedient to obviate the mischiefs of his enforcing the letter of the law in every instance, by compelling them to retain their wives; thus subjecting them to their ill treatment and brutality, even to the beating, and perhaps killing them. So that, in this *toleration* of *divorce* for, or upon account of, the *hardness of their hearts*, MOSES might say as PAUL, *1 Cor. vii. 12.* *To such speak I, NOT the LORD—but as to other things, NOT I, but the LORD, ver. 10.*—The Bishop proceeds—“ And so we find expressly  
 “ their *kings* might have, though not  
 “ a *multitude*, *Deut. xvii. 17*; and their  
 “ *best king*, who read GOD's law *day and*  
 “ *night*, and could not but understand  
 “ it, took *many* wives without any re-  
 “ proof: nay, GOD gave him more than  
 “ he had before, by delivering his (late)  
 “ master's *wives* to him, *2 Sam. xii. 8.*  
 “ And besides all this, MOSES, speaking  
 “ all

“ all along in this chapter of *consanguinity*  
 “ and *affinity*, it is reasonable, as *Schind-*  
 “ *lerus* observes, to conclude he doth so  
 “ here, not of *one woman to another*, but  
 “ of one \* *sister to another*. There being  
 “ also the like reason to understand the  
 “ word *sister* properly in this place, as the  
 “ words *daughter* or *mother* in others, ver.  
 “ 17, and chap. xx. 14. where he for-  
 “ bids a man to take a woman and *her*  
 “ *mother*, or a woman and *her daughter*, as  
 “ *Theodoric Hackspan* sufficiently notes.

“ The meaning therefore is, that  
 “ though *two wives at a time*, or *more*,  
 “ were permitted in those days, no man  
 “ should take two *sisters* (as *JACOB* for-  
 “ merly did, before there was any posi-  
 “ tive law against it) begotten of the  
 “ *same father*, or born of the *same mother*,  
 “ whether legitimately or illegitimately,  
 “ (which, though it may seem prohibited  
 “ before, because the marriage of a *bro-*  
 “ *ther's wife* is forbidden) yet it is here  
 “ directly prohibited, as other marriages  
 “ are which were implicitly forbidden  
 “ before; for ver. 7. the marriage of a  
 “ *son* with his *mother* is forbidden, and

\* It is to be observed that מִשְׁתָּה is used four times  
 in other parts of the chapter, and necessarily signi-  
 fies, as our translators have rendered it—a *sister*.  
 So Lev. xx. 17, 19.

“ ver.

“ ver. 10. the marriage of a *father* with  
 “ his *daughter*.”

To the above remarks of the learned and judicious *Bishop Patrick*, I will venture to add a conjecture of my own, the solidity of which must be submitted to the *reader's* determination. It is very certain that at ver. 16. the marriage of a *brother's wife* is forbidden, and as the *wife's sister* is thereby virtually or implicitly forbidden to marry the *sister's husband*, it might be supposed that there was little occasion to mention the *wife's sister* in direct terms afterwards, ver. 18. But the necessity of this is apparent, when we recollect the precedent of JACOB, which the *Jews* would probably have urged against an *interpretative* prohibition of such a thing, at ver. 16. It was certainly *no sin* in JACOB, because there was *no law* against it; but after this positive law, it could not be done *without sin*, for—*sin is the transgression of the law*.

As there was but *one* man and *one* woman at first, the peopling of the world must have been carried on between much nearer relations, and therefore there could be no law to forbid marriages of this sort. So after the flood, when but *eight persons* were left of mankind. But when



the *reason*\* ceased, the *thing itself* was to cease, as demonstrably appears by God's enacting the positive laws against marrying within certain degrees of *consanguinity* and *affinity*; subject nevertheless, like all other of His general laws, to such exceptions, restraints, or qualifications, as He in his infinite wisdom should see expedient. Some of them carry their own reasons with them, others do not, but doubtless all equally wise, as equally the dispensations of *Omniscience*.

By the way, I cannot help observing it as a very extraordinary thing, that the *Christian* churches should adopt one part of the law respecting marriages, and pay no regard to the rest of it. They have made the *eighteenth* chapter of *Leviticus*, from ver. 6 to ver. 18, inclusive, a part

\* After the *Exodus*, the *Israelites* were restrained from marrying within certain degrees of consanguinity, which had been, till then, permitted, to prevent their taking wives from among the idolatrous nations with whom they lived.

This was the reason which *Abraham* gave, for chusing a wife for *Isaac* from his own kindred, *Gen.* xxiv. 3, & seq. and his descendents for following his example, *Gen.* xxviii. 1, & alib. but which was now entirely ceased, by their being so multiplied; so that they could easily find wives, without being necessitated to marry their near relations, or to contract marriages with the *heathen*. See *Ant. Univ. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 140.

of

of our religion; so *Exod. xx. 14.* and some other passages of the law. But why this, and not the rest of the whole law of God, where marriage, as His ordinance relating to all mankind, is concerned? Is not this proceeding of *Christian churchmen*, like that of the *Jewish*, *Mal. ii. 9.* where God complains—*Ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law?* The man who renders a solid reason for adopting *Exod. xx.* to ver. 17, inclusive, and *Lev. xviii.* from ver. 6 to ver. 18, inclusive, as well as many other parts of that chapter, and at the same time rejecting *Exod. xxii. 16.* and *Deut. xxii. 28, 29.* as touching the moral intendment of them, will perform a very difficult task, unless he can prove that marrying a wife's sister, for instance, is a greater crime, and of more evil tendency to mankind, as well as more inimical to the interests of civil society, than enticing a virgin—debauching her—and then abandoning her to infamy and prostitution; or, that though this was a sin in the days of Moses, yet it is no sin now, and therefore the positive commandments which God enacted to prevent it, are no longer to be considered of any force or obligation.

It is true, that we do not keep *precisely* the \* *seventh day* as the *Christian Sabbath*, looking upon the *fourth* commandment, in that respect, as ceremonial, typical, or prefigurative of something else (whether rightly or no does not come within my present design to consider); but as to the *moral* part, which sanctifies a given *portion* of our time for the public worship of Him to whom we stand indebted for *all*, we very rightly look upon this as the bounden duty and service of *Christians*, as well as *Jews*, till time shall be no more. So with regard to the sum of *fifty shekels*, or the dower according to

\* I have lately seen a MS. of that laborious calculator and chronologist, *Mr. Kennedy*, in which he would prove, that what we call *Sunday*, is the true original *Sabbath*. This is very clear, that the *week* was divided into *seven days*, so early as at the creation of the world (see *Gen. i.*); that each day is distinguished by the works which God wrought therein; that the day on which God is said to *rest from all His work that He had made*, is called the *seventh day*, which he *hallowed and sanctified* on that account; that the fourth commandment recites all this, as the reason for its being kept holy; that the *Jews* have at all times observed our *Saturday* as the *seventh day* or *Sabbath*; that its Greek name *Σάββατον*, and its Latin name *Dies Sabbathi*, always denoted the *Jewish SABBATH*; and that the day we call *Sunday*, is in the New Testament called *Μία Σάββατον*, the *first day of the week*—ergo, it cannot be the *seventh*.

the



*the dowry of virgins*, (see *Exod.* xxii. 16. *Deut.* xxii. 29.) this may be set down amongst the ceremonial or temporary observances of what may be called, to this purpose, the *Jewish* law. But with respect to the *moral* intendment of those laws in *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*, which was to establish, ratify, and confirm the *marriage-ordinance* in the fullness of its obligation—*they shall be one flesh*—to prevent men from abandoning women to whoredom and prostitution, and all the bitter consequences of seduction and dereliction, those laws ought to be as binding on the consciences of mankind, as the *morality* of the *fourth* commandment, or of any other law of God whatsoever. To these purposes they are as much *moral* laws as *any* of the *ten commandments*. If this be not the case, why do we waste the time of public worship in causing these chapters to be read over to the people? *Deut.* xxii. is our first lesson for the *evening-service* every 4th of *March*; as is *Exod.* xxii. for every 8th of *February* in the *morning*. But it would be very strange if the *minister* was to preface with—“ Good people, ye are assembled here  
 “ to hear the word of God ; but ye are  
 “ not to mind what ye hear, because the  
 “ protection of females from the lust,  
 M 3                    “ villainy,

“ villainy, treachery, and cruelty of men,  
 “ is no longer an object of the laws  
 “ which I am going to read to you.  
 “ They bound the *Jews*, but *we Chris-*  
 “ *tians* have nothing to do with them.”

Dreadful as such language would be to hear, it says no more, than every man does, who contends for the obsolescence and abolition of these wise, holy, and salutary provisions for *female* security.

With respect to the New Testament, the subject of *polygamy*, simply considered, is not so much as mentioned, either as good or bad. The more I have searched, the more I am convinced that it is not to be found, unless incidentally in the epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, and there only hinted at as the possible situation of certain people. Nor is there the least occasion it should be mentioned, as it was amply explained and determinately settled in the *law which was given by Moses* (see John i. 17.); where we do not find it said, that *one law* was given by *Moses*, and *another law* by *Jesus Christ*; but *Ὁ νόμος*, THE LAW—which, in the connection it stands, must signify the *whole law*—all the law which God ever ordained or revealed to mortals—*was given by Moses*; *Grace*—to pardon the transgressions of that

that law; *Truth*—to fulfil and answer every demand of its *moral* requirements, as well as every ceremonial prefiguration—*came by* JESUS CHRIST. *Heb.* ix. 15. *Col.* ii. 17. So that CHRIST *is the end of* THE LAW *for righteousness to every one that believeth.* *Rom.* x. 4.

However, as it is almost universally taken for granted, that “though *polygamy*” might be *allowed* under the Old Testament,” yet it is forbidden under the New Testament; and as this opinion is as prevalent as that of *transubstantiation*, and the worship of the *Virgin Mary*, are in the church of *Rome*, and for centuries were in the church of *England*, let us proceed farther to examine the foundation upon which it stands.

In the first place, I cannot find, or even conceive, an instance in which the writings of the *apostles* of CHRIST contradict those of MOSES and the PROPHETS. If there could be such a thing, *both* must be *rendered suspicious*—one must be *false*—both sides of a contradiction cannot be *true*. The *adversaries* of revelation have long *tried*, as they have earnestly wished, to find such a thing, but in vain! God forbid that its *friends* should even imagine it possible! If it be true, that the scriptures of the Old Testament



are *able to make us wise unto salvation* \*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. it must be because they contain the *law* and the *gospel*; for no man can be *wise unto salvation* without the knowledge of these. They certainly contain *both*—the *gospel was preached unto ABRAHAM*, Gal. iii. 8; to the ISRAELITES under the Old Testament, as *well as to us* under the New Testament. Heb. iv. 2. We have *the same spirit of faith*, 2 Cor. iv. 13. and doubtless the same *object of faith*, 1 Cor. x. 4. Numb. xxi. 9. with *John* iii. 14, 15. Wherefore it is not to be conceived, that God should leave the *heirs of salvation* in a state of ignorance touching the *original* institution of marriage, or of ~~the~~ the meaning of those *positive* laws which were to enforce it (and this after the giving of the law for 1500 years together) any more under the Old Testament than under the New Testament. It must be as necessary for a *Jew*, in order *to be wise unto salvation*, to know God's mind and will on these interesting and important subjects, as for a

\* The Apostle adds—*διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* —*through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS, i. e. believing Him to be the MESSIAH.* For want of believing which, the apostate *Jews* were not made *wise unto salvation* by the scriptures of the Old Testament.

*Christian.*

*Christian.* Each must be judged by the *same law*—each *saved*, though under different dispensations of it, by the *same gospel*.

As little probable is it, that He should allow His own beloved children to fly in the face of His authority, and live in the breach of His *positive law*, for so long a period, without the least check or reproof, when part of His gracious covenant runs in these words, Ps. lxxxix. 30. *If his children forsake my LAW, and walk not in my JUDGMENTS; if they break my STATUTES, and keep not my COMMANDMENTS; then will I visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges.* There are instances enough of this for other things—witness DAVID's *broken bones*, Ps. li. 8. for his *adultery* with BATHSHEBA, and murder of URIAH. But where is there one instance of it for *polygamy*? Wherein did GOD ever punish it? DAVID died as really a *Christian believer* as St. PAUL did; witness his *last words*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5; and yet, amidst all the explicit confessions he made in the most solemn hours of his *repentance*, he does not once bewail the *polygamy* he lived in; nay, almost the last act of his life was an act of *polygamy*, in taking ABISHAG the *Shunamite* to lie in his *bosom*, his wife BATHSHEBA being then living.

living. For though it be said, 1 Kings i. 4. that *he knew her not*; yet it plainly appears, by what SOLOMON said, 1 Kings ii. 22, 23. that she was so *betrothed* or *espoused* to DAVID, as to be looked upon as *his wife*. Accordingly she belonged to the crown; was to be at the disposal of the *successor*; and therefore ADONIJAH, who was elder than SOLOMON, by asking for ABISHAG, the late king's widow, to wife, is treated as having a treasonable design against the crown itself, and is put to death as a *traitor*.

Is it then conceivable that *polygamy*, allowed of God uninterruptedly through so many ages and generations with impunity and even approbation, should all of a sudden start up into a *mortal sin*, by the *seventh* commandment's receiving a construction which it never before had—which was never before given to the words in which it was conceived? How could our lives and properties be secure, if time could alter the meaning of our penal statutes?—who will draw the line, and say how much or how little time is necessary to effect this? But if such can be the case with the *moral* law of God, then was the *Psalmist* mistaken in calling it *perfect* (Ps. xix. 7.) for it is *changeable*. Then is



is it less to be depended on than the laws of the *Medes and Persians*. *Esth.* i. 19.—less sacred than the decree of an *earthly monarch*. *Esth.* viii. 8. *Dan.* vi. 15. If this be the case, what man can have any security for his *peace*?—In order therefore to avoid something *worse* than *absurdity*, we must conclude, that the original *institution of marriage*, and the *seventh commandment* of the *decalogue*, mean neither more nor less, where *Christians* are concerned, than where the *Jews* were—or, in other words, they mean precisely *one* and the *same* thing under the New Testament as under the Old Testament.

By taking texts here and there in the New Testament, and detaching them from their reference to and connection with the Old Testament, many *heresies* have arisen; as *Arianism*, *Socinianism*, and perhaps most others. *Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures*. So with regard to marriage—because CHRIST said—*Some make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake: he that is able to receive it, let him receive it* (*Matt.* xix. 12.); and ST. PAUL, *1 Cor.* vii. 1. and in other parts of that chapter, speaks in favour of a *single life*, with respect to the then *distressed* state of the

the church (ver. 26.) there were multitudes of people, in the early \* ages of *Christianity*, who took these things in a wrong sense, and found out that "marriage" was a *carnal* thing, and forbidden by "the New Testament, as unbecoming" the purity of that dispensation:" little reflecting, that the command of *increase and multiply*, and the institution of *marriage* as the means thereof, were the dispensations of God Himself to our *first parents* when they were in a state of perfect innocence, and therefore could not be incompatible therewith.

That venerable man *John Trapp*, on 1 Cor. vii. 8. says—"The blemish will never be wiped off some of the an-

\* "There arose in the church from *antient times*, "sects of *heretics*, who condemned wine, and the "use of animal food, and *marriage*; and not only "heretics, but the *orthodox* also, ran into extravagant notions of the same kind, crying up *celibacy* "and a *solitary life* beyond measure, together with "rigid and uncommanded austerities and macerations of the body. (*Fortin*, Rem. vol. i. 278.) "Christ therefore, as we may conjecture, was present at a *marriage-feast*, and honoured it with the "miracle of turning *water* into *wine*, that it should "stand in the *gospel* as a confutation of these foolish errors, and a warning to those *who had ears to hear*, not to be deluded by such *fanatics*. St. *John*, who records this miracle, lived to see these "false doctrines adopted and propagated." Ib.

"tient

“ tient \* *fathers*, who, to establish their  
 “ own idol of I know not what *vir-*  
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 to be more *taken captive by the devil*  
 (2 Tim. ii. 26.) than his is, who is  
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 a one, who, under this persuasion, ab-  
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 “ claimed against matrimony, and recommended  
 “ monkish abstinence almost as much as *Manes*,  
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† Dr. *Alexander*, Hist. Wom. vol. ii. p. 269. in-  
 troduces what he there says on the subject of *emas-*  
*culatation* on a religious account, with this pertinent  
 and sensible observation :

“ The two sexes were evidently intended for each  
 “ other, and *increase and multiply* was the first great  
 “ command given them by the Author of Nature.  
 “ But suppose no such command had been given,  
 “ how it first entered into the mind of man, that  
 “ the propagation or continuation of the species  
 “ was criminal in the eye of Heaven, is not easy to  
 “ conceive. Ridiculous, however, as this notion  
 “ may appear, it is one of those which early infi-  
 “ nuated itself amongst mankind, and plainly de-  
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given with a blessing from GOD—*increase and multiply, and replenish the earth, &c.* This was at the original creation of *male and female* upon earth. Gen. i. 27, 28. And again, at the renewal of the earth after the deluge, this commandment stands, Gen. ix. 1. 7. repeated *twice*. Now can an opposition to so positive, so express, so reiterated an ordinance of Heaven, be reckoned a constituent part of *righteousness* and *true holiness*? What is this, but to fly in the face of the *divine wisdom* and *goodness*, and to esteem ourselves *wiser* and *holier* than the LORD of all? So those who prefer a life of *solitude* to matrimonial connection, as *holier* and *better*, how much *holier* and *better* do they make themselves than Him who said—*It is NOT GOOD for man to be alone?* It is remarkable, that this reiterated command for the propagation of the species stands, Gen. ix. 7. in direct connection, as it were, and immediately following after the positive law against *murder*: as *privation* of life is an offence against this, *prevention* of life is something very

“monstrated, that reasoning beings are most apt to  
 “deviate from nature; and not only to disobey her  
 “plainest dictates, but, on pretence of pleasing the  
 “Author of Nature, to render themselves for ever  
 “incapable of obeying them.”

like



like it, and therefore fitly placed near it in the sacred code.

Some of the fathers were wild enough to say—*hoc dictum, ratione multitudinis liberorum, pertinere ad tempora ante CHRISTUM, non ad nos qui alio vivimus ævo—mundum jam non desiderare ILLUD CRESCITE ET MULTIPLICAMINI.* “ This  
“ command, by reason of multiplying  
“ children, belonged to the *times before*  
“ CHRIST, not to *us* who live in another  
“ age—the world does not now want  
“ that same—*Be fruitful, and multiply.*”  
Such were the delusions of *Jerom—Tertulian—Chrysostom—Cyprian—Oecumenius,*  
&c. Bernard, in Cant. Serm. 59. thus  
glosses on the words—*The voice of the*  
*turtle is heard, &c.*; which he says is  
“ the preaching of *continence*, respecting  
“ those who castrate themselves for the  
“ kingdom of heaven. *At the beginning*  
“ that voice was not heard, but rather  
“ *increase and multiply*; for barrenness  
“ was subject to a curse; *polygamy* was  
“ \* allowed,” &c. His words are —

“ *Vox*

\* This same *St. Bernard*, abbot of *Clairvaux*, from whom the *Cistercian* monks derived the name of *Bernardines*, was one of the most eminent among the Latin writers of the 12th century. He was a man of genius, taste, and judgment, in some respects,

“ *Vox turturis audita est*, quæ est predi-  
 “ catio continentiæ, eos, qui se *castrant*  
 “ propter regnum cœlorum, spectans;  
 “ cum ab initio vox ista non sit audita,  
 “ sed magis — *crescite et multiplicamini*,  
 “ sterilitas etiam maledictioni fuit sub-  
 “ jecta, *polygamia* concessa,” &c.; but all  
 this is now at an end, “ quia hodie, re-  
 “ pleto mundo, non tam sit necessaria  
 “ quam olim” — “ because now, the world  
 “ being filled (with people) it is not so  
 “ necessary as formerly.” If the reader  
 has a mind to see how far folly and en-  
 thusiasm can carry people on these sub-  
 jects, let him read *Tertullian's* epistles to  
*Eustachius* — to *Gerontius* — and against  
*Helvetius*; *Tertullian* on Chastity; *Chry-*  
*sostom* on Virginité; *Cyprian* on the dis-  
 cipline of Virgins; and *Oecumenius* on

spectis, in others weak and superstitious. See *Mosh.*  
 vol. i. 591. A pretty clear proof of the latter part  
 of his character lies before us. His confining the  
 command — *Be fruitful and multiply — to the days of*  
*the Old Testament*, is certainly a master-stroke of folly  
 and weakness — however, his acknowledgment of the  
 allowance of *polygamy* as a concomitant of that com-  
 mand, is much more scriptural and consistent, than  
 the comments of some more modern expositors (or  
 rather *exposers*) of the scriptures, who contend for  
 the obligation and permanency of the command it-  
 self, but deny the permanency and obligation of  
 those laws which the divine wisdom enacted for its  
 regulation.

I Cor.

1 Cor. vii.—then he will begin to find out how MARRIAGE ITSELF was vilified, and of course what gave rise to the condemnation of *second* marriages of all sorts, therefore of *polygamy*, in the *Christian church*, till the church of Rome had the impudence to *anathematize* the man who should say, that “it was *not forbidden by the law of God*,” (see *Brent. Coun. Trent. p. 784*) “just as they did those who should affirm, that for a *priest* to marry was *allowed by the law of God*.” Ibid.

The consequences of all this unnatural plan of *celibacy*, are too many to enumerate, too \* *horrible* to particularize. It fared with numbers of the *Christians*, who did not like to retain the *divine command* in their practice, as it did with the *beat-thens*, who did not like to retain God in

\* It is an observation of the excellent authors of the *History of Popery*, vol. i. p. 359. that “the first law against a certain *unnatural vice* in *England* was by *Anselm* Archbishop of *Canterbury*, in the days of *William Rufus*; which said *vice* seems not to have been heard of here till *priests* were forbidden marriage. However, they treated it very gently, leaving it less penal in a *priest*, than to enjoy his lawful wife. — *Secular men*, guilty of this crime, were to be absolved only by the *bishop*; but the *monks* and *priests*, it seems, might civilly absolve each other. Yet even this *canon*, such as it is, was soon after recalled, and never published.”



their knowledge—God gave them up to uncleanness, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lye, &c. For this cause God gave them up \* to vile affections, &c. See Rom. i. 24—28. When we endeavour to stop the course of a river by laying a dam across the stream, the effect must be, that it will either make its way, bearing down all before it, or it will make a passage over its banks, and overflow and destroy the country. Such is the effect of endeavouring to stop the natural course of those desires, which the Creator hath implanted in us for the purpose of carrying His *primary command* into execution. They will bear down all before them, or be turned out of their course; and then follows what the history of the *Popish* celibacy abundantly acquaints us with. As this is a subject too indelicate to dwell upon, I will only refer the reader to those books which treat thereof; such as *Fox's Martyrology*—*The Packets*

\* A thousand instances of which might be given—*sed ab uno disce omnes*—Pope *Sixtus V.* on the petition of *Peter Ricu*, cardinal and patriarch of *Constantinople*, of *Jeronymo* his own brother, and the cardinal of *St. Luce*, permitted “unto them and every of them, *sodomy*, with this clause—*FIAT UT PETITUR*—Let it be done as it is desired.” *History of Popery*, vol. ii. 292.

from

from *Rome*, collected and published in *two volumes* quarto, by a *set of gentlemen*, 1735, under the title of *The History of Popery*. A work this, which is too valuable to be lost to the public; and therefore, as I fear it is near out of print, it were to be wished it should be reprinted in as handsome an edition as that above referred to.

As for those men who have the *gift of continency*, they, as it appears from the scriptures, and all experience, are probably *very few*, at least comparatively; and those who received it in the days of *our LORD* and His *apostles*, seem to have received this for the particular purpose of keeping themselves *disentangled from the affairs of this life*, during the infancy and persecution of the church, 1 Cor. vii. 7, 17. Such do not want *cloysters* and *cells* for their security. As for those who have \* it not, locking

\* These certainly constitute the bulk of mankind, as all experience throughout all ages sufficiently shews. The natural structure of the human body, its natural secretions, &c. which are carried on daily, not by any contrivance or management of the creature, but by the power of infinite wisdom, impressed, we know not *how*, on the wondrous mechanism of every part, afford us such *physical* reasons for this, as to amount to demonstration of the necessity of marriage in the generality of men. This

locking them up together in such places, and depriving them of the remedy which God commands, in marriage, has been attended with a two-fold wickedness; 1. in living contrary to the ordinance of Heaven; 2. in gratifying their desires contrary to the course of nature, or at least in some way which the *divine law* hath prohibited. Therefore the *Apostle* doth not say—if *they cannot contain*, let them shut themselves up, or pray that the order of nature may be inverted; but—*let them marry*; it is better to marry than burn: as if he had said—“ One or “ *other* of these must be the consequence.” So, when married persons have separated for a while or *season*, on some *religious occasions*—*come together again*, saith he, lest *Satan tempt you for your incontinency*.

From all which it may be gathered, that *celibacy* is not an ordinance of God, but a snare of *Satan*—that marriage is the ordinance of God; therefore, that a man who *may* marry, and doth not, has no

observation is abundantly verified, by the manner of OUR SAVIOUR's expression, Matt. xix. 11, 12. where He speaks of a power of total abstinence as the immediate and *special gift* of heaven, and this for a *special purpose*, unless in the cases He puts of *accidental* imbecillity, arising, in some, from a defect in their constitution; in others, from external violence by the hands of men.

more



more warrant from God's word to expect that He shall be kept from *vice*, than that he would be kept from *starving*, if, instead of *eating* and *drinking*, he was to pray that the appetites of *hunger* and *thirst* might be totally annihilated.

The indiscriminate \* and total prohibition of *polygamy*, as it has *no warrant* from the word of God, may also be the means of plunging many into the mischiefs of uncommanded *celibacy*; for many men there are, who very early in life marry, perhaps without all the consideration which ought to be exercised in so momentous an undertaking—many things may happen which may be very reasonable, and indeed unavoidable, causes of separation from their wives; as for in-

\* If the enacting part of 1 Jac. c. 11. had gone no farther than the preamble, and its severity been confined to—"divers evil-disposed persons, who  
"being married, run out of one county into another, or into places where they are not known,  
"and there become to be married, having another  
"husband or wife living, to the great dishonour  
"of God, and utter undoing of divers honest  
"men's children and others"—it would have been a wholesome law, and highly justifiable in its penalty on such miscreants; who are undoubtedly guilty of one of the vilest and most injurious frauds that can possibly be committed. It seems to fall within the equity of Exod. xxi. 16. for such persons are a sort of—*ἀνδραποδισαί*, or *man-stealers*.

stance—incurable disease of mind or body, unconquerable violence of temper, perpetual refractoriness \* of disposition, levity

\* It is to be feared, that there are not a few females, who (like other monopolists) take the advantage of the poor husband's situation, to use him as they please; and this for pretty much the same reason why the *ass*, in the fable, insulted and kicked the poor *old lion*—because it is not in their power to *resent* it as they ought.

The advice which king *Ahasuerus* received from his wise men, the seven princes of *Media* and *Persia*, upon queen *Vashti's* disobedience, would have an excellent effect, could it be followed. Many an high-spirited *female* would have too cogent a reason against the indulgence of a refractory disposition, not to suppress it—her *pride*, which is now the husband's *torment*, would then become his *security*, at least in a great measure; for *pride* is a vice, which, as it tends to *self-exaltation*, maintains uniformly its own principle—not to bear the thoughts of a *rival*. See *Esther* i. 10, &c. As things are with us, the poor man must grind in *mola asinaria* during life.

It is certain, that nothing can be a release from the bond of marriage itself but *death*, or an act of *adultery* in the wife. But that a man is at all events bound to maintain the *external* bond, by cohabiting with a woman, who, instead of being an *help meet for him* (as we say) becomes, by the violence and perverseness of her temper and disposition, a constant and increasing torment, and this after the most friendly, tender, and kind admonitions—is not consonant either to scripture or reason.

Some will tell us, that such a thing must be looked upon as happening by the will of PROVIDENCE,

as

levity of behaviour—which, though not amounting to such proof as to be the ground of utter *legal* divorce, yet such

as

as a chastisement or visitation from Heaven, and therefore must be submitted to and endured.

So is sickness from the hand of God; so are afflictions of all kinds, and certainly to be submitted to with patience and resignation; yet to use means of recovery from sickness, and of deliverance from trouble and affliction, are apparent duties; and why not in the other case? The great *Milton* has some excellent and scriptural observations on these points in his *Tetrachordon*; to which I refer the reader.

The whole analogy of scripture agrees with that saying of the *Apostle*—*Let not the wife depart from her husband*; and again—*Let not the husband put away his wife*—1 Cor. vii. 10, 11. But then these things must be construed agreeably to the analogy of that *wisdom which is profitable to direct*—Eccl. x. 10. They cannot mean, that a wife is not to depart from her husband, who threatens or endangers her life—nor that an husband may not separate from a wife who obstinately sets herself to be the plague and torment of his.

This kind of things falls under a sort of *necessity*, which must always interpret the law in favour of self-preservation. *Thou shalt do no murder*—constitutes a capital offence in the man who wantonly or maliciously kills another—but if a man slays another in his own defence, it is an excusable homicide: this from the necessary care which every man has a right to take of his own life. The *ship-master* to whom I intrust my goods, is wicked and base, if he wantonly cast them into the sea; but if a storm arise, and he cast them out to save the ship from sinking, he is highly justifiable. I would



as may destroy the whole comfort of a man's life. By these and many other means, an husband may be reduced to the situation of an *unmarried* man, harassed by the same desires, subject to the same temptations; yet his condition is ten-fold worse; the one may marry, the other cannot: so he must remain hopeless and helpless, or plunge into *vice* and misery, because he is debarred of the remedy which God hath provided, stripped of that undoubted privilege with which God and nature have invested him, by the lyes and forgeries of *fathers and councils*, &c. The *Romish* church indeed, at the *council of Trent*, ANATHEMATIZED all who should say, that  
 “ those who have not the gift of chas-  
 “ tity might marry, in regard that God  
 “ doth not deny the gift to him that  
 “ doth demand it.” This *antiscriptural*

therefore argue from *necessity* on the point of *separation*; for I cannot find any privilege conferred on one creature to make another wretched, and that without remedy. Of this *necessity* every person must judge at his peril; for—as the old proverb says—*None can tell where the shoe pinches, so well as he that wears it*: but then be it remembered—that *every man shall give an account of himself to God*. Rom. xiv. 12. If this were considered as it ought to be, it would certainly be the best means of binding both parties over to their good behaviour, in all conjugal disputes.

decree,

decree, which directly gives the lye to the *Apostle*, 1 Cor. vii. 9. is founded upon a *fallacy*, which many fall into, from arguing without the necessary distinction between what God *can* do, and what He *will* do. That He *can* do every thing is without a doubt; but that we are warranted to expect He *will* do what He hath no where promised, is not true. God *could* certainly have made us to live upon the *air*; but He hath not: meat and drink are absolutely necessary for our subsistence; it would therefore be the highest presumption, nay even the madness of *enthusiasm*, for any man to pray that the natural appetites of *hunger* and *thirst* might cease, and that for the future he might live, not on meat and drink, but solely by respiration of *air*. So, to pray to Him whose command is — *Be fruitful and multiply, bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein* (Gen. ix. 7.) that the natural desire which is to lead to this may be annihilated, and the effect of it destroyed, is to *petition* against the *divine wisdom*, to *arraign* the *divine holiness*, and to remonstrate, in effect, against having any share in an obedience to the *divine command*—Where is there—where *can* there be a promise,

mise, to warrant so unhallowed a proceeding? Surely no where, but in the imaginations of those who have fallen themselves, and who want to lead others into the *snare of the devil*. When we pray against what God hath *forbidden*, no doubt we shall, in His own way and time, *obtain grace to help in every time of need*; but when we pray against what He has *commanded*, we tempt Him to deliver us up to the delusions of our own minds, and *our end will be according to our works*—what that end is likely to be, the histories before hinted at very sufficiently declare.

That there may be situations, and particular circumstances, under which it is not only *lawful*, but *duty*, to pray for *continence*—I mean for entire subduction of, and power over, our natural desires—there can be no doubt; as where they would lead us to forbidden enjoyment: but then we must judge of this by the scriptures, not by the prejudices, folly, and superstition of men like ourselves; for, at this rate, we may be praying that God would alter His mind, change His will, and vacate His commands, in order to make way for our opposition to them. Whereas, *this is the confidence that we have in Him,*  
*that*



*that if we ask any thing ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask (i. e. ACCORDING TO HIS WILL) we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him. 1 John v. 14, 15.*

For a man to pray that he might never again feel the appetites of *hunger* and *thirst*, or, at least, be enabled to refrain entirely from satisfying them, would be deservedly reckoned madness—but to pray to be kept from *gluttony* and *drunkenness*, and all forbidden indulgence and excess, would be asking *according to the will of God*, and the man would have a *scriptural* ground and warrant to expect an answer of peace.

So, if a man takes it into his head, that those other *desires*, which God hath, for the wisest purposes, implanted in our nature, are *sinful in themselves*, and, on *this footing*, prays against them, he is under a sad delusion, and every petition he utters, is no less than an arraignment of the *wisdom* and *holiness* of the great *Creator* of all. Yet the *Popish* histories are replete with miracles wrought by *Christ* and the *Virgin Mary*, in answer to such petitions; and no doubt but these *yes* are most *devoutly* believed by thousands, who  
make

make *men's* \* *traditions*, and not God's *word*, the rule of their faith.

Besides the evils which have been noticed as the consequences of our *superstition* on the subject of *polygamy*, the utter *extinction* of *families* might also be mentioned; whereas, sooner than this should be the case in *Israel*, we find God enacting a peculiar *positive law*, in order to prevent it; which said law was certainly a virtual command of *polygamy* in many, perhaps in most, cases, as it was very rare to find an *unmarried* man among the *Jews*. The law to which I allude, is that of *Deut. xxv. 5.* where the *husband's brother* was to marry the widow of the deceased, if he died without children—that *his name might not be put out of Israel*. Though all the reasons of this law do not now subsist, therefore the law itself, as far as those reasons have ceased, hath itself ceased; yet it serves to shew us, that

\* Among the fooleries of the *sixth century*, an entire abstinence from marriage was held the surest way to Paradise. Women were not even suffered to approach the altar, nor touch the pall which covered it, unless when, by the *priests*, it was delivered to them to be washed. The *eucharist* was too holy to be touched by their naked hands, they were therefore ordered, by the *canons* of the church, to have a white linen glove upon the hand in order to receive it. See Alexander's Hist. of Wom. vol. i. p. 166.

GOD

God did certainly allow *polygamy*, and even *command* it, sooner than suffer inheritances to fail by the *extinction of families*.

Among us, if a man be married to a *barren* woman, he cannot take another wife while she lives, but must content himself with letting his nobility, titles, honours, and family be annihilated, and his estates escheat to the crown, under pain and penalty of being adjudged a *felon* if he marries a *second wife* (living the first) who might be the means of continuing and transmitting all these things to a long and numerous posterity.

This foolish superstition is like that of the *Jews* in the days of *Mattathias*, who suffered themselves to be slaughtered by the enemy without resistance, because it was the *sabbath-day*, 1 Mac. ii. 32, 38. or like that of the *Carthusians*, who live entirely on *fish*, and would not eat a piece of *other meat* even to save their lives.

The modern *Jews* are wiser, for though they in general coincide with the government where their lot happens to be cast, so that they are *polygamous* or *monogamous*, according to the laws of the country they live in; yet if a *Jew* be married *ten years* to a woman, and has no child by her, he is at liberty to take another,



another, that he may have an heir to his substance; and in so doing he certainly is justified by the law of God; which law we have set aside, and established our own superstition in its place, which not only tends to the annihilation and extinction of families, and of course to *depopulation*; but is, as elsewhere is more fully observed, the source of endless ruin and destruction to the *weaker sex*, whose *seducers*, if married men, are totally exempt from making them that amends, and doing them that justice, which God's law commanded, and which, among *us Christians*, is looked upon as *duty* to withhold, or rather, as a *mortal \* sin* to comply with.

\* *Bellarmino*, that great champion for *The Man of Sin*, saith—Lib. 4. de Rom. Pontific, “ Si Papa erraret præcipiendo vitia, & prohibendo virtutes, teneretur ecclesia credere vitia esse bona, & virtutes malas, nisi vellet contra conscientiam peccare.”

“ If the *Pope* should err in commanding *vices*, and in prohibiting *virtues*, the church would be bound to believe that vices are good, and virtues evil, unless she would sin against conscience.” And again, *Cont. Barel.* c. xxxi. “ In bono sensu dedit CHRISTUS Petro potestatem faciendi de peccato non peccatum, & de non peccato peccatum.” “ In a good sense—CHRIST gave *Peter*” (and of course the *Pope*) “ a power of making that no sin which is sin, and to make that to be sin which is not a sin.” What better principle do we proceed upon in the matters here mentioned?

As

As these points are fully treated in other parts of this book, I will now proceed to shew, that the wild notions about marriage, which were introduced into the church, bear an earlier date than the days of *Tertullian*, and those other fathers mentioned before.

“ There were others,” says Mr. *Broughton*—*Hist. Lib. tit. Marriage*—“ who simply exclaimed against marriage as unlawful under the *gospel*. This doctrine was first taught by *Saturnilus*, a scholar of *Simon Magus* and *Marcion*, but afterwards better known amongst the *Encratites*; to these may be added the *Apostolics* or *Apotactics*, the *Manichees*, *Severians*, and many others. The church had great struggles with these antient *heretics*, who inveighed bitterly against marriage under the *gospel-state*, and wrought upon many weak minds, to be guilty of great irregularities, under pretence of a more refined way of living.

“ The church had also another contest with the *Montanists* and *Novatians*, about *second* marriages, these *heretics* rejecting them as utterly unlawful.”—

And indeed the ecclesiastical histories inform us, that this *madness* (for I can call it nothing else) was carried so far, as that

*second* marriages were styled no better than *whoredom*; and *ecclesiastical* persons were forbidden to be present at them on pain of *excommunication*. This in the very face of the scriptures of God, which declare just as much for *second* marriages as for *first*. Rom. vii. 2, 3. 1 Cor. vii. 39. By all this we see what work may be made with the scriptures, when the imaginations of men are let loose, instead of *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*, and making God the interpreter of His own word.

As for the practice of *polygamy* amongst the first *Christians*, it was probably very \* frequent; if not—why did PAUL (1 Tim. iii. 2. and Tit. i. 6.) recommend the

\* So it should seem to have been in times long after them, not only among the *laity*, but the *clergy* also; for Pope *Sylvester*, about the year 335, made an *ordonnance*, that every *priest* should be the *husband of one wife* only.

So in the sixth century, it was enacted in the canons of one of their councils, that if any one is married to *many wives*, he shall do penance. See Alex. Hist. Wom. vol. ii. 217, 272.

The case of *Philip Landgrave of Hesse*, as determined by the *six reformers*, is well known. But all these things prove nothing, with respect to the lawfulness or unlawfulness of the matter in the sight of God: I only mention them, to shew that *Christians* have, by no means, thought always alike on the subject. The transactions of an inspired *apostle* are certainly good evidence—to *these* let us attend.

choice



choice of *Bishops* and *Deacons* from amongst those who had but *one wife*? What occasion for this caution of the *apostle's*, if none had *more than one*? That the election was to be made from amongst the *Christian believers*, there can be no doubt, that is to say, of such as had been admitted to *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*, and were enrolled as *members* of the *Christian church*. To suppose that none of these had more than *one wife*, is to suppose the *apostle* giving a needless rule in the election of *Bishops* and *Deacons*. To suppose that any who had *more than one wife*, should be admitted to *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*, if CHRIST had forbidden *polygamy* as *adultery*, is to suppose a greater absurdity still, and that the great *apostle of the Gentiles* was less faithful to his trust, than those *Jesuits* who refused to admit the King of *Tonquin* into the CHRISTIAN church, unless he would put away *all his wives but one*: for which these *pseudo-apostles* were very justly driven out of the country.

The learned *Selden* has proved, in his *Uxor Hæbraica*, that *polygamy* was allowed, not only amongst the *Hebrews*, but amongst most other nations throughout the world; doubtless amongst the inhabitants of that vast tract of *Asia*, through-

out which the *gospel* was preached by the great *apostle of the Gentiles*, where so many *Christian* churches were planted, as well as in the neighbouring states of *Greece*: yet in none of *PAUL's epistles*, nor in the seven awful *epistles* which *St. JOHN* was commanded to write to the *seven churches* in *Asia*, is *polygamy* found amongst the crimes for which they were reprov'd. Every other species of *commerce between the sexes*; is distinctly and often mentioned, this not once, except on the *woman's side*, as *Rom. vii. 3*; but had it been sinful and against the law on the *man's side*, it is inconceivable that it should not have been mentioned on *both sides* equally.

When *St. Paul* says that a *Bishop* or *Deacon* is to be the *husband* of *one wife*, it certainly carries with it a tacit allowance of *polygamy*, as to the *lawfulness* of it, with regard to all *other men*; not that it was *sinful* in one more than in another; but this was a prudential caution in that distressed and infant state of the *church*, that those who were to have the management of it, should have as little avocation and distraction as the nature of things would admit of. *PAUL* does not say that a *Bishop* or *Deacon* should not be *married*, as the church of *Rome* says, but that

that he should be the *husband of one wife*; for however those who had *more* could find time to manage their *own* affairs, they could not be supposed to have leisure enough to attend the *church*, and its embarrassed and various concerns, as they ought. Upon this principle he seems to give the preference to those who had *no wife*, 1 Cor. vii. 32, 33. *I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the LORD, how he may please the LORD: but he that is married, careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.* This certainly relates to all *Christians*, but especially to *ministers*. The *heretics* of old took it so strongly in the former sense, that they held marriage *unlawful to Christians*—the *Papists* take it so strongly in the latter, that it is one of the authorities on which they forbid their *clergy* \* to marry at all.

There

\* The celibacy of the *clergy* was among the errors of very early date, for *Paphnutius*, a venerable *confessor* and *prelate*, who assisted at the *Nicene council*, which was held ann. 325, where there was a dispute, whether "*ecclesiastics* should not separate from their wives, which they had married while "*laymen*," said—*Satis esse ut qui in clerum fuissent adscripti, juxta veterem ecclesiæ traditionem, jam non amplius uxores ducerent.*—"It was sufficient that



There are some who interpret the above passages (1 Tim. iii. 2. and Tit. i. 6.) to mean, that a *Bishop* or *Deacon* should, if a *widower*, have had but *one wife*, or have been but *once married*; and this upon the ground of what is said, 1 Tim. v. 9. concerning the *women* who were to be chosen to the office of *Deaconesses*—*Let not a woman be taken into the number under sixty years, having been*

“ they who were inrolled among the clergy, according to the *antient tradition of the church*, should “ no more marry.” *Clerical celibacy*, and the condemnation of *polygamy*, stand on one and the same footing, and that a very lame one; that is to say, on the *antient tradition of the church*; so did the religion of the *Scribes and Pharisees*, and so do the *superstitions* of the church of Rome to this day.

*Paphnutius's* speech on the occasion is to be found in Jortin, Rem. vol. ii. p. 249. Though what *Paphnutius* says may rather apply against the clergy marrying a second time, yet those to whom he spake must be supposed to have holden it unlawful for the clergy to marry at all, else how could they be for their separating from the wives they took when laymen?

However, even the partial prohibition of wives to the clergy did not ripen into a *decree*, 'till about fifty years after, when *Siricius*, bishop of Rome, ordained, that if a clerk married a *widow*, or a *second wife*, he should be divested of his office. For many hundred years this was not observed, 'till Gregory VII. called *Hildebrand*, by cruel decrees of excommunication, deprived ministers of their *lawful wives*, and compelled the clergy to the vow of *continency*. *Hist. of Popery*, vol. i. 21.

the

*the wife of one man.* There are also those, who, on the authority of these passages, hold it unlawful for a *minister* \* to marry

\* Whether any carry this point so far as the anonymous answerer to Luther, *Tr. de digamia Episcoporum*, I can't say; but he declares—"Mortaliter peccant qui bigamos (sacerdotes scilicet) ecclesiæ stipendio sustentant."—"They sin mortally who support clergymen that have been twice married, with the allowance or stipend of the church."—Again—"Peccant qui scientes ex bigami ore verbum Dei pollui audiunt."—"They sin, who knowingly hear the word of God polluted, by the mouth of a minister who has been twice married."—Again—"Bigamus censendus est, non solum is qui duas duxit virgines, sed & viduam aut aliter corruptam."—"He is to be reckoned a *bigamist*, not only who has married two *virgins*, but also he that hath married a *widow*, or a *woman* otherwise corrupted."

His conclusion breathes the true spirit of ignorance, superstition, and blind zeal.—"In summa—quicumque proprias voluptates, & luxuriæ exactionem, apostoli verbis & patrum honestis præponit decretis, non tamen sacerdotis aut ecclesiastico stipendio cedere dignum putat, is non solum tolerandus non est, sed ad corvos abigendus, quod non ovis morbosa totum corrumpat ovile, & tam laudabilem, bonam, & longævam consuetudinem pestilenti suo defædet exemplo."—In fine, "Whosoever prefers his own pleasures, and the requirements of luxury, to the words of the *apostle*, and to the decent decrees of the *fathers*, and yet doth not think proper to depart from the ministry, or his ecclesiastical stipend, is not only not to be tolerated, but to be driven away to the crows (we should say, *thrown to the dogs*) that one scabby sheep might not mar the whole flock, and defile, by his own pestilent example, so laudable, good, and antient a custom."

a *second* time on the loss of his wife, and unlawful also for *any* woman to *marry again* on the loss of her husband. These ridiculous opinions owe their birth to the before-mentioned cause, of taking words by the *sound*, instead of the *sense*—the usual consequence of detaching scripture from scripture, not comparing it with itself, by taking the whole together. By this, men may prove—*quidlibet ex quolibet*—"what they please from what they please;"—and this is the sheet-anchor of error, as well as of many monstrous practices, and so has been in all ages; they can be maintained no other way. The whole doctrine of *transubstantiation*, absurd as it is in all its parts, is held together by the sound of *Hoc est corpus meum*—This is my body.—The *sound* of *hæreticum devita*, in a Latin version of Tit. iii. 10. has authorized the most barbarous murders of thousands, who have been burned alive by the inquisition, under the denomination of *heretics*. It has been made to signify *hæreticum de vitâ*—an *heretic from life*; that is—*put him from life—kill him*.—Thus, by separating the word *devita*, and turning the last two syllables into the substantive *vita*, the preposition *de* just answered the purpose. A less *tragical* consequence of this method  
of



of interpretation is related by *Erasmus*. He tells of a friar preaching from those words of CHRIST, Luke xvii. 17. which stand in some *Latin* versions—*Nonne decem facti sunt \* mundi*—who began to prove there are *ten worlds*. An arch fellow standing by, stopped his mouth with the following words—*Sed ubi sunt novem?*—but where are the nine?

Dr. *Hammond*, in his note on 1 *Tim.* iii. 2. says—“What is the meaning of “ *μίας γυναῖκος ἀνὴρ*—the husband of one “ wife—both here and ver. 12, and *Tit.* “ i. 6. and of *ἐνὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή*—the wife of “ one husband, chap. v. 9. will not easily “ be resolved.” But surely all difficulty vanishes, when the whole is taken together; and it is observed from the *original* in what different *tenses* the verbs *γινώσκει* and *εἶμι* are used. This shews that the *apostle*, 1 *Tim.* iii. 2, and *Tit.* i. 6. was describing the situation of the men he was then speaking of, as what *it then was*—and in 1 *Tim.* v. 9. that of the *widows*, as to what *it had been*. 1 *Tim.* iii. 2. *Δεῖ ἐν τὸν Ἐπίσκοπον εἶναι μίας γυναῖκος ἄνδρα*—A Bishop ought to BE (not to HAVE

\* I would just acquaint the *unlearned* reader, that the substantive *mundus* signifies a *world*—the adjective *mundus* signifies *clean*.

BEEN) *the husband of one wife*; and Tit. i. 6. 'Εἰ τις ΕΣΤ'ΙΝ μιᾶς γυναῖκος—if any BE (IS) *the husband of one wife*. 'Εἶν being of the present tense, can signify only what a man is at the time spoken of: whereas the expression concerning the women, 1 Tim. v. 9. is widely different. The woman is called Χήρα, a widow; and it is observable, that the verb is not expressed as before, either in the infinitive or indicative mood of 'Εἶν, *to be*, but by the participle of the *præteritum*, or *past time*, of the verb γινώσκειν, *to be or become*.—It is γεγονῶσα—which we have rightly rendered—*having been*—that is—in *time past having been or become the wife of one man*—a widow, who never had been but once married; not—that had not had two husbands at a time; such a thing was hardly ever heard of, as lawful, even amongst the heathens \* themselves. I would

\* Never among Jews, or even Turks, was it permitted that the woman should have more than one husband at once. Only among the barbarians there is mention of the Πολυγαῖοι, a people so called, because the wife among them had many husbands. So among the Medes, that dwelt in the mountains, it is said a woman was married to five husbands at once. See Hammond on 1 Tim. iii. 2. Montesquieu mentions the tribe of the Nairis, on the coast of Malabar, where the women have many

would therefore harmonize and paraphrase the whole as follows:—"Forasmuch as all things are to be done decently and in order, (1 Cor. xiv. 40.) but this cannot be, unless some proper form of government be established; it is necessary that proper officers be appointed to administer that government. Some who are to be—*ἐπίσκοποι*—overseers of the whole; others *διάκονοι*, Deacons, or inferior serving ministers under them. The first order of men are to overlook the clergy, as well as the laity—to preach the word—administer the sacraments, and to have power to censure evil doers, even as far as excommunication, the church agreeing thereto, 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. Such an office should, doubtless, be filled with men of irreproachable characters, and of such conduct and dispositions as to be in all respects blameless, not only for the better maintenance of their authority, but also for the influence of their example. As such an office must

many husbands. Sp. of Laws, vol. i. p. 374, octavo. But all this is as contrary to nature itself, as the custom of some of the Indian women's drowning their children in the Ganges, or exposing them to wild beasts to be devoured.



“ moreover require great attention, those  
 “ should be chosen, who are entangled  
 “ as little as possible in the *affairs of*  
 “ *this life*, 2 Tim. ii. 4. Therefore,  
 “ though for this reason *single men*  
 “ might in general answer the purpose  
 “ best, (1 Cor. vii. 33.) yet it may be  
 “ expedient, in some instances, to chuse  
 “ *married men* into the offices of *Bishops*  
 “ and *Deacons*. Where this is the case,  
 “ the election should not be made of  
 “ such of the *Christians* as have more  
 “ than *one wife*, as such a situation must  
 “ necessarily involve the person in more  
 “ *worldly care*, than can be consistent  
 “ with a due attention to that *care*,  
 “ which must *come upon them daily*, re-  
 “ specting the *church*. Therefore, the  
 “ having more than *one wife* should al-  
 “ ways be considered as a bar to a man’s  
 “ election, either to the office of a *Bi-*  
 “ *shop* or of a *Deacon*, (1 Tim. iii. 12.);  
 “ for though these last may not have so  
 “ extensive a jurisdiction, yet, what with  
 “ preaching the word—assisting the *Bi-*  
 “ *shops* and *elders*—visiting the sick—and  
 “ distributing the *church’s* alms to the  
 “ poor—*one wife* and family is as much  
 “ as can be at all considered consistent  
 “ with any tolerable diligence in the du-  
 “ ties of a *Deacon’s* office.

“ But

“ But as the sick are to be visited and  
 “ attended, as well as the poor relieved,  
 “ it may be necessary also to appoint  
 “ *women* for these purposes, especially  
 “ as to attending and nursing the poor  
 “ of their *own sex*. These may require  
 “ many offices highly improper for *men*  
 “ to be engaged in ; though the nursing  
 “ *sick men*, or visiting and relieving them,  
 “ may very properly fall also under the  
 “ care of *women*. These *women* may  
 “ also be called Διάκονοι τῆς ἐκκλησίας (see  
 “ Rom. xvi. 1.) *servants* or *ministers of the*  
 “ *church*. Those who are to be deemed  
 “ proper for these offices, must not be  
 “ young, raw, unexperienced girls ; nor  
 “ *married women*, whose attention be-  
 “ longs to their husbands and families,  
 “ 1 Cor. vii. 34 ; nor the *younger wi-*  
 “ *dows*, who are not arrived at a time of  
 “ life suitable to such employments,  
 “ 1 Tim. v. 11 : let these *marry*, to keep  
 “ themselves out of mischief, ver. 12,  
 “ 13, 14. The only *women* who are fit  
 “ to be chosen as *servants* or *ministers* of  
 “ the church in the respects above men-  
 “ tioned, should be far advanced in years ;  
 “ that is to say, not less than *threescore*  
 “ *years old*, who having buried their  
 “ husbands and *brought up their children*,  
 “ 1 Tim. v. 10. have time, as well as  
 “ inclination,

“ inclination, to devote themselves to  
 “ the offices of the church. They should  
 “ also be *sôber* and discreet persons, who,  
 “ by their conduct in their younger  
 “ years, have shewn their temperance  
 “ and sobriety, by having contented  
 “ themselves with *one husband*, and who,  
 “ ever after the death of that husband,  
 “ have secluded themselves from any  
 “ further worldly engagements of that  
 “ sort, so as to be justly styled *widows*  
 “ *indeed; though desolate, yet trusting in*  
 “ *GOD* (1 Tim. v. 5.); and like ANNA,  
 “ *Luke ii. 36, 37. continuing in supplications*  
 “ *and prayers night and day.*”—This I take  
 to be a consistent and clear view of these  
 passages taken together. As we may from  
 hence infer, that there were women in  
 the church younger than *sixty years*, by  
 the Apostle's express exclusion of those  
*under* that age from those offices to which  
 women were to be chosen; as also that  
 there were many who had been *twice*  
*married*, by his designing those who had  
 been but *once married* for the aforesaid  
 offices; so we may as fairly conclude,  
 from his saying a *bishop*—*δεῖ εἶναι*—*ought*  
*to be*—and again, if any, *ἕστιν*, *is or be* the  
*husband of one wife*—that there were many  
 Christians, not who *had had*, but at that  
*present time* actually had *more than one*  
*wife.*



*wife*. If this had not been the case, it would have been as much out of the question to have mentioned the having but *one wife*, as to have said, that none should be chosen but those who had but *one head* or *one body*, when it was not to be supposed that any man had more.

As to the conceit, that, "what the *Apostle* says about the *bishops* and *deacons*, is to prove that no *minister* may marry a *second* time," it is all but as bad as saying, with the church of *Rome*, that he *ought not to marry at all*.

With respect to the business of *polygamy*, as to the thing itself, nothing that is here said proves it to be more or less sinful in one man than in another; that depends wholly on the law of God delivered by *Moses*. Therefore the *prudential* reasons, for which he evidently excepted against *polygamists* being elected to *church-offices*, no more affects the matter of *polygamy*, than the excepting against *women* under sixty years old, proves it *sinful* in a woman to be *younger*, or that, because no woman was to be chosen to the office of a *deaconess* who had been *twice married*, therefore it was sinful for the woman to marry again after the death of her husband, contrary to

1 Cor.

1 Cor. vii. 39. and to the exprefs advice of the *Apostle*, 1 Tim. v. 14.

As to the supposed unlawfulness of *second* marriages, or the notion, that if a man lost his wife, it was *sinful* to marry again; this began very early in the church, and spread itself even to this country. We find in the time of *Ed. I.* about the year 1276, the parliament adopted a constitution made by the *Pope* at *Lyons*, to exclude *men* that had been *twice married* from all *clerks privilege*. So that if a man was convicted of *felony*, who would otherwise have had *his clergy*, and it appeared that he had been *twice married*, he was to be *executed like other lay-people*. A statute of 18 *Ed. III.* mitigated the rigour of this law with respect to clerks, by making a suggestion of *bigamy* triable by the *ordinary*, before the *justices* could proceed. But all were delivered from the bondage of such laws by 1 *Ed. VI.* c. 12. § 16. which enacts, that—"every person, who by any law or  
 "statute of this realm ought to have  
 "the *benefit of clergy*, shall be allowed  
 "the same, although he hath been *divers*  
 "times married to any single woman or  
 "single women, or to two wives or more,  
 "or to any widow or widows."

Among the six famous articles proposed  
 I by

by Henry VIII. to the *parliament* and *convocation*, one was—"whether *priests*, that  
 " is to say, men dedicate to God by  
 " priesthood, may, by the law of God,  
 " marry after or no?"—"After great,  
 " long, deliberate, and advised disputa-  
 " tion and consultation had and made  
 " concerning the said article, as well by  
 " the consent of the *King's Highness*, as  
 " by the assent of the *Lords spiritual* and  
 " *temporal*, and other *learned* men of his  
 " *Clergy* in their *convocations*, and by the  
 " consent of the *Commons*, in this *present*  
 " *parliament* assembled, it was and is  
 " finally resolved, accorded, and agreed  
 " —that *priests*, after the order of priest-  
 " hood received as afore, may not \* marry  
 " by

\* In the *eighth century*, some monks pretended, that the angel *Gabriel* had brought *twelve* articles from heaven, one of which was, that *ecclesiastics* must not marry. See Jortin Rem. vol. ii. p. 43.

In the *ninth century*, *Pope Nicholas I.* made a decree to restrain *priests* from marrying. The bishop of *Augsburg* wrote a pathetic letter to the *Pope*, setting forth the sad and mischievous consequences of taking their wives from the *priests*. The letter is at large in *Fox*, vol. ii. p. 392. and well worth reading. He tells *Pope Nicholas*, that his predecessor *Saint Gregory* (i. e. *Gregory IV.*) made such a decree, but repented of it on this occasion; to use the old bishop's words as they are there translated—  
 " Upon a certain day, as *St. Gregory* sent to his  
 " fish-pond to have some fish, his servants drained  
 " it,



“ *by the law of God.* The enacting part  
 “ of 31 Henry VIII. c. 14. goes on and  
 “ says—If any person shall preach—  
 “ teach—or obstinately affirm and de-  
 “ fend, that any man, after the order of  
 “ priesthood received, may marry or  
 “ contract matrimony, he shall be ad-  
 “ judged to suffer death, and forfeit  
 “ lands and goods as a felon; and if any  
 “ priest do actually marry or contract  
 “ marriage with another, or any man that  
 “ is or hath been a priest do carnally use  
 “ any woman to whom he is or hath  
 “ been married, or with whom he hath  
 “ contracted matrimony, or openly be  
 “ conversant or familiar with any such  
 “ woman, both the man and the woman  
 “ shall be \* adjudged felons.”

That

“ it, and found at the bottom 6000 infants heads,  
 “ which were brought to him. Upon this he did  
 “ greatly repent in himself his decree touching the  
 “ single life of the *priests*, which he confessed to be  
 “ the cause of that so lamentable murder.” The  
 “ letter in *Fox*, as above cited, is in Latin; the trans-  
 “ lation is referred to p. 393, as having been before  
 “ inserted; which the reader may turn to. Whether  
 “ the above letter was written by the *bishop of Augs-*  
 “ *burg*, according to *Crit. Hist. of England*, p. 83.  
 “ or by *Volusianus bishop of Carthage*, as *Fox* seems to  
 “ think, is very immaterial.

\* How ought the *clergy* of the church of *Eng-*  
*land*, some of whom are not only *married* men, but,  
 having lost a *first*, are now living in comfort, ho-  
 nour,

That all this was contrary to the law of God is apparent; for the *priests* and *Levites* under the Old Testament, and the *apostles* and *other ministers* under the New Testament, who were respectively the *clergy* of the time, might marry, and

nour, and reputation with a *second wife*, (see before, p. 197. n.) to bless the day when men *dared* to attack the reigning *superstition* of the times, and in the face of all manner of *reproach*, and even of the danger of *death* itself, boldly vindicate those rights of mankind, with which the LAW OF GOD had invested them, but of which they had been deprived by the insolent tyranny of men like themselves?

It little concerned *Luther*, and his fellow *champions* for the honour of the DIVINE LAW—that they were called *antichrists*—*scandals to religion*—*revivers and propagators of the laws of Mahomet*—or that the Popish *Cerberus*, with his *three heads* of IGNORANCE, SUPERSTITION, and BLIND ZEAL, threatened to tear them to pieces. They *persevered*—they were *successful*—and what they sowed in times of *darkness* and *persecution*, we are reaping in days of *light* and *liberty*.

Thank God the aforesaid *Cerberus* is chained up. He now will *bark*, and *bark* he may 'till he be *hoarse*; the man who minds him can have but little else to do.

The *author* of this book pretends not to be a *prophet*—but judging from what *has been* to what *may be*, he entertains not the least doubt, that, a *century* hence, the world may either wonder at the *man* who had WILDNESS enough to attack the *present system* of things with regard to *marriage*, or that there were found people who were ABSURD enough to abuse him for it.—This to THOSE WHOM IT MAY CONCERN—VERBUM SAT.

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many

many of them were actually married men. I therefore mention these things, to shew how we may be led into error, even to *putting men to death, thinking we do GOD service* (John xvi. 2.) when once the word of GOD is left for the inventions and traditions of men; and how far men may believe things which are *contrary* to scripture are *right* and *good*, and things agreeable to scripture are *wrong* and *abominable*. —that this may become the *creed* of a whole nation, nay of a whole church including many nations, so as to gain the sanction of public statutes, the solemn opinions of lawyers, the most awful determinations of courts of justice. The condemnation of *polygamy* is equally an human device, and has no more authority from scripture for making a man a *felon* and to suffer death (see 1 Jac. c. 11.) for having *two wives*, than the stat. 31 Henry VIII. above mentioned had for hanging a *priest* and the *woman* he had married. All these things are equally the inventions of men, or rather of \* SATAN

\* Luther saith well—"Satanæ commentum est, peccatum fingere ubi nullum est, & justitiam negare, ubi vera est."—"It is an invention of Satan to feign sin where there is none, and to deny righteousness where it truly is."

*transformed*



*transformed into an angel of light*; but the scriptures are the true *Ithuriel's* spear, the *touch* of which alone can make him appear in his own shape, of a *lyar* and a *murderer from the beginning*.

The first public \* law in the empire against *polygamy* was at the latter end of the *fourth* century, about the year 393, by the emperor *Theodosius*; this was repealed by the emperor *Valentinian* about *sixty* years afterwards, and the subjects of the empire were permitted to marry as *many wives* as they pleased; “ nor does “ it appear (says *Chambers* tit. *Polygamy*)

\* In the year 324, Christianity was by law established, when *Constantine*, after the death of *Licinius*, reigned, without a colleague, sole lord of the *Roman empire*. However favourable the protection of the *civil magistrate* was at that time, as well as in after times, to the *Christian religion*, yet from hence we must date the misfortunes which have attended the interference of human power, in the establishment of *human systems* of *faith* and *ceremony*; the *former* of which have often been contrary to *God's word*, the *latter* utterly subversive of it. The advancement of the clergy in dignities, riches, and honour, under this emperor and his successors, proved so many pernicious baits to sacerdotal ambition, avarice, and pride; and introduced those scenes of vice and profligacy among the clergy, which occasioned it to be said—*Mundus per ostium, pietas per fenestram*—The world entered in at the door—piety flew out at the window.

“ that the *bishops* made any opposition to  
 “ this introduction” — (he should have  
 said *restoration*; for if it had not existed  
 before, no law would have been made  
 against it by *Theodosius*) — “ of *polygamy*  
 “ into the empire.” After all, no \* hu-  
 man authority can decide upon the mat-  
 ter, as this has evidently given its suf-  
 frage *both ways* upon the same questions.  
 But can the determinations of the *all-wise*  
 God be thus precarious and contradic-  
 tory? Can the Old Testament and New  
 Testament be at as great a variance as the  
 31 Henry VIII. c. 14.—which makes it  
*death* for *both the man and woman*, in the  
 case of a *priest*, to marry, or even to con-  
 tract matrimony, or to affirm it lawful so  
 to do—and the 5 and 6 † Edw. VI. c. 12.  
 which

\* For which reason, I forbear to lay any stress  
 on the decisions of our chief *reformers*, *Luther*—  
*Melancthon*—*Bucer*—*Zuinglius*, &c. who, after a  
 solemn consultation at *Wittemberg*, on the question  
 —“ whether for a man to have *two wives at once*,  
 “ was contrary to the *divine law*?” answered una-  
 nimously, “ That it was not”—and, on this au-  
 thority, *Philip the Landgrave of Hesse* actually mar-  
 ried a *second wife*—his *first* being alive. This proves  
*what they thought*, but, by no means, that they  
 thought *right*.

† The preamble to this law affords a most striking  
 proof of the power of *superstition* and *error* over the  
 minds

which declares the marriage of *clerks* to be as lawful as the marriages of *other* men?—Had the scriptures forbidden *polygamy*, all the human laws that ever could be enacted, and all the human authorities that ever could be produced, could not make it *lawful in the sight of God*—for that were to place men above God. On the other hand, if God hath not forbidden it, but even *allowed* it, all the men upon earth, though joined with all the *angels* in heaven, cannot make it *sinful*—for this were also to set the creatures above *their* MAKER. Judging and determining on the matter either way,

minds of men: for though 2 and 3 Edward VI. c. 21. had made it lawful for *priests* to *marry*, yet far the greater number of people held such marriages “to be inconsistent with the law of God, and only “to have been *tolerated*” by the former statute, “like *usury* and other unlawful things, to avoid “greater inconvenience and evils,” insomuch that they “accounted the children of such marriages to be “*bastards*, as born in unlawful wedlock, and would “hardly attend the ordinances of the church, if administered by *married priests*.” Our prejudices against *polygamy* arise from the same source of error and superstition, and are equally unwarranted and groundless, as the law of God no more forbids *this* than it does the *other*. Forbidding to *marry*, where God has not forbidden it, is the *doctrine of devils* (1 Tim. iv. 1, 3.) however *holy*, *pure*, and *pious* it may be deemed, whether by *Protestants* or *Papists*.



but on the authority of God's law, is a much more serious thing than is usually imagined ; for there are as many *woes* pronounced on those *who call good evil*, as on *those who call evil good*. If. v. 20.

The learned GROTIUS, in his book *De Ver. Christian. Rel.* lib. ii. § 13. note 12, seems to intimate, that 1 Cor. vii. 4. is to be relied on as a *text* full in point to prove the unlawfulness of *polygamy* amongst *Christians* ; for that it was lawful amongst the *Jews*, he not only allows, but brings many authorities to prove, in note 7. on lib. ii. *sect.* 13. But there is another text, at ver. 2, which, as it has been looked upon as a conclusive argument against *polygamy*, I will first consider, and then proceed in order to the following verses, from ver. 2 to ver. 5, inclusive. The words of the text alluded to are — *Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband.* The strength of the whole argument drawn from this passage consists in a sort of \* quibble upon

\* I have elsewhere observed, on the danger of this method of interpretation, we have but to rely on the *sound* of words, and *all second marriages* are directly forbidden, ver. 27. *Art thou loosed from a wife ?*

on the word *wife*, that, as well as the word *husband*, being in the *singular number*—*wife*, not *wives*. But suppose it had been said, “ Let every man have his *own* “ servant, and every servant his *own* mas- “ ter,” would it afford a conclusive proof, that because *no man can serve two masters*, therefore no master could have *more than one* servant?

However, as this text has been, and is, looked upon as a direct proof of the unlawfulness of *polygamy* amongst *Christians*, let us give it a thorough consideration. In the first place, let us restore it to its own genuine words; for our *translators* have introduced something which is not in the *original*. The words in the *Greek* are—*Διὰ δὲ τὰς πορνείας*—the verb *to avoid* is not there—the words *τὰς πορνείας*, which we translate *fornication*, are *plural*, not *singular*, and should be rendered *fornications*, or *the fornications*—they being in the *accusative* case, are go-

*wife? seek not a wife.* Again, the method of establishing doctrines by mere words or sentences detached from the context, might furnish us with as direct a prohibition of marriage to *Christians*, as ever was contended for in the primitive churches; for no words can be plainer than *μὴ ζητεῖτε γυναῖκα*, *seek not a wife.*

verned, not by the verb *to avoid*, which *is not* in the text, but by the preposition *διὰ*, which *is*. This preposition *διὰ* has various meanings, according to the case it governs. Sometimes it governs a *genitive*—sometimes an *accusative*, and then it may signify—*for* ;—so *Dr. Hammond* renders it here—*but for fornications* ;—also—*with respect to*—*as to*—*with regard to*—*quod attinet ad* :—so ver. 26. *διὰ τὴν ἐνεσώσαν ἀνάγκην*, may be rendered, *with respect to* (*in respect of*—*Dr. Hammond*) *the present necessity*. Many authorities might be cited for this use of the word, both in sacred and profane writers ; and it so suits with the subject-matter of the verse in question, that I conceive this to be the sense of *διὰ* in this place.

The *context* shews very plainly, that what *St. Paul* says, is in answer to some *questions* put to him *by letter*, and sent to him at *Philippi*, where he appears to have been when he wrote the answer ; and if we may judge of the *questions* by the \* *answer*, which is surely a very fair way of

\* This, in the instance before us, is the only way by which we can judge, as we have not the *Corinthians* letter itself to inform us of its contents ; for want of which, there are some passages in the chapter *dark and hard to be understood*. Still a meaning



of judging, they probably concerned a very infamous, but common practice, that of *married men* lending out or even *marrying*

meaning they certainly must have; and our judgment, with respect to that meaning, should be directed—first, by a consideration of the manners, customs, dispositions, and characters of the *writers*, also of their situation with regard to time and place—secondly, of the character, situation, and office of the *answerer*; whose holy zeal, and consummate knowledge of the *divine law*, must render it impossible for him to write a syllable which doth not exactly harmonize with the Old Testament.

Both these I have endeavoured to keep in view, while I have been setting down my thoughts on this passage of scripture.

When the *Apostle* saith *ἔχας τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα* 'EXETΩ, he certainly uses the verb *ἔχω* in a larger sense than merely *having*.—This verb signifies to *possess*, *retain*, which is to *continue the possession of*. So it is apparently used, Matt. xiv. 4. where *John the Baptist* tells *Herod*, concerning *Herodias his brother Philip's wife*, whom *Herod* had taken to himself—Οὐκ ἔχεις σοι 'EXEIN αὐτήν. So *Mark* vi. 18. Οὐκ ἔχεις σοι 'EXEIN τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ Ἀσέλφου σου—where the *Baptist* cannot be supposed merely to condemn *Herod's having* her at first, but also to declare the unlawfulness of his *retaining*, or *continuing the possession of* her. So here—let every man *retain*, *continue the possession of*—*γυναῖκα* the wife—*τὴν ἑαυτοῦ* of himself—i. e. who is his own property—and not suffer her to go to other men, as the custom was, nor take other men's wives to himself.

The *Apostle* proceeds—καὶ ἐκάστη τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ἄνδρα 'EXETΩ. Here is an evident variation in the phraseology, on which we shall take occasion to observe hereafter. At present, let it be noticed, that

the

ing their wives to other people, and of course the married women going from their own husbands to other men. That this

the introduction of the word *ἰαίον*, must affect, and materially, the meaning of the word *ἐξέτι*, and make also the word *ἀνδρα* to be taken in an exclusive sense—as thus—*Let every (wife) retain, possess (i. e. keep to, as we say) the man or husband appropriated to her exclusively of all other men.*

Thus both parts of the verse are in the strictest analogy with the *divine law*, and equally contribute to reprobate the breach of it by “community of women,” which was a *Gentile*-custom.

As for the conclusion against *polygamy*, which is drawn from the word *wife*, as well as the word *husband*, being in the *singular* number, it will not hold; for the scriptures plainly shew us, that *wife* must frequently be understood in a *distributive* sense. A remarkable passage of this sort is in 1 Tim. iii. 12. *Let the deacons be the husbands of ONE WIFE—μὴ ἑνὶ ἀνδρὶ.*—But can any body suppose, that there was to be but *one wife* amongst them all? So in the tenth commandment—*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's WIFE*—This (like *ox, ass, house, servant*) must be taken in a *distributive* sense, and mean any married woman or women whatsoever. So Exod. xxi. 33, 34. *If a man dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein—the owner of the pit shall make it good, &c.* Are not *pits, and oxen, and asses*, to be here understood? So in the text, the word *wife* means any woman or women who may be married to the man.

The word *husband* must be understood in an *exclusive* sense, because the whole *Bible* shews that a woman could have but *one husband*—here well expressed by the *ἰδίῳ ἀνδρὶ*. In short, this scripture, like all others, must be interpreted according

this was the case in *Corinth*, may well be taken for granted, when we consider

to the *analogy of the faith*, by taking a view of the *divine law* in all its parts, and not by confining ourselves to mere literal construction of a single word—or text—or passage; for, by this means, we might be brought into all the errors of the *church of Rome*, or into all the *heresies* that have been invented; not one of which is without some *text* of scripture for its support, which being *wrested* from all the rest, has been *wrested* from its meaning, and made to signify just what the fancies of men have applied it to. It is very truly observed by an ancient writer, "*Turpe est tota lege non inspecta, vel perfecta, de lege judicare.*" "To judge of the law, without reading over and examining the whole, is shameful." He proceeds—"Ita turpe etiam theologo textum originale in scriptura sacra non inspicere, aut illum studio præterire, & tamen scripturam explicare velle." "So it is shameful in a *theologist* not to inspect the original text in the sacred scripture, or purposely to pass it by, and yet pretend to explain the scripture."

The interpretation which the *Rhemists* give to this 1 Cor. vii. 2. is by no means to be despised—I will here set it down; for—

—*Fas est & ab hoste doceri.*—

"Let every one have, keep, or use his own wife, to whom he was married before his conversion; for the Apostle here answereth to the first question of the *Corinthians*, which was not—whether it were lawful to marry? but—whether they were not bound, upon their conversion, to abstain from the company of their wives married before in their infidelity? as some did persuade them they ought to be." This would seem a good exposition of the place, if the *Apostle* had not so expressly treated this point in the following verse.

that



that there were so many sources from which such practices were so easily derived. The *Corinthians* were a people lewd and \* debauched to a proverb—*Χοινοθιάζειν*, to *Corinthianize*, or play the *Corinthian*, was a phrase which expressed a man's being abominable:—add to this the fondness of the *Greeks* for the maxims of the divine *PLATO*, as he was called, one of which was —κοινὰς μὲν γυναῖκας, κοινὰς δὲ εἶναι παῖδας, that “women and “children ought to be common:”—add to this the sect of the *Gnostics*, those early *heretics*, who held “a community of “women, and that all marriage was “of † the devil;”—these spread their errors

\* See I Cor. vi. 11. former part. *Strabo* writes, that there was at *Corinth* a temple of *Venus*, so rich, that it maintained above a thousand harlots sacred to her service, ἱεροδούλαις ἑταῖραις, which were consecrated both by men and women to that goddess. See the advantage and necessity of the *Christian* revelation, by *J. Leland*, D. D. vol. i. p. 174. Others say, that the number of prostitutes in honour of *Venus* at *Corinth* was 2000. See *Lett. of Jews to Voltaire*, vol. ii. p. 53.

*Strabo*, *Geog.* lib. xii. speaking of the temple of the moon in *Comana* of *Cappadocia*, where all manner of the most horrid impurities were committed, as parts of religious worship, calls it—“a little *CORINTH*.”

† Among the errors of the famous *Manes* or *Manichæus*, in the third century, this principle is found—he taught, that “all marriage is of the “devil,

errors far and wide among the *Christian* churches:—and lastly—the horrid practice of *men's lending their wives to others*, was even a sort of \* law in *Greece*; this originated first in *Sparta*, that famous city of *Peloponnesus*, on the edge of which *Corinth* stood; from thence it spread itself into the rest of the cities of *Greece*, *Corinth*, no doubt, as well as others. The following account of this vile custom is to be found in *Plutarch's* life of the celebrated *Spartan* law-giver *Lycurgus*. “ He (*Lycurgus*) next bethought himself how to prevent that wild and  
“ womanish passion of *jealousy*, by making it a matter of reputation, not only  
“ to banish from matrimony all violence

“ devil, invented by him to tie the souls to the  
“ flesh, and to retard their return to heaven.” See *Jortin's Remarks*, vol. ii. p. 50.

\* *Grotius*, speaking of the *Jewish divorces*, saith —“ Quod et hodie usurpant *Mahometistæ*, & olim  
“ *Græci* ac *Latini* tanta licentia, ut & uxores ad  
“ tempus utendas aliis darent *Lacones* & *Cato*.” Which the *Mahometans* often practice at this day, and formerly the *Greeks* and *Latins*, with such licentiousness, that they could grant the use of their wives to others for a GIVEN TIME. This was the case among the *Lacedemonians*, and *Cato* also did the same.” I thus translate, or rather paraphrase, the latter part of *Grotius's* words, otherwise they do not so well answer to the general words *Græci* & *Latini*. See *Grot. De Verit. lib. ii. § 13*.

“ and

“ and disorder, but also to allow men  
 “ the freedom of *imparting the use of*  
 “ *their wives* to deserving persons, that  
 “ so they might have children by them.  
 “ And he laughed at those who think  
 “ the violation of the marriage-bed such  
 “ an insupportable affront, that they re-  
 “ venge it by murders and cruel wars.  
 “ *Lycurgus* thought a man not to be blam-  
 “ ed, who, being in years, and having  
 “ a young wife, should recommend some  
 “ virtuous handsome young man, that  
 “ she might have a child by him, who  
 “ might inherit the good qualities of  
 “ such a father, and this child the good  
 “ man loves as tenderly as if he was his  
 “ own getting.—On the other hand, a  
 “ worthy man, who was in love with a  
 “ *married woman* upon account of her  
 “ modesty, and well-favouredness of her  
 “ children, might, without formality,  
 “ *beg of her husband a night's lodging;*  
 “ that he might, like slips of a fine tree  
 “ planted in a goodly garden, have chil-  
 “ dren of a good race, and well related.  
 “ For *Lycurgus* was of opinion, that  
 “ children were not so much the pro-  
 “ priety of their parents, as of the *whole*  
 “ *commonwealth*; and therefore he would  
 “ not have them begotten by the *first*  
 “ *comers,*



“ comers, but by the best men that could  
“ be found.”

This custom was far from being reck-  
oned *criminal*\* or *adulterous*, it was ap-  
plauded greatly; and “ so far were wo-  
“ men from that scandalous liberty which  
“ has been objected to them, that they  
“ knew not what the name of *adultery*  
“ meant.”—“ A proof of this we have  
“ in *Geradas*, a very antient *Spartan*,  
“ who, being asked by a stranger what  
“ punishment their law had appointed  
“ for *adultery*? answered—“ My friend,  
“ there are no *adulterers* in our country.”

\* The *community of wives* cannot be conceived  
to have escaped the lewd *Corinthians*, when we con-  
sider how it spread far and wide among the *Gen-  
tiles*. This is said to have been the custom of the  
*Troglodytes*, *Agathyrsi*, the *Massagetæ* and *Scy-  
thians*, of whom *Strabo* saith—“ they had their *wives*  
“ in common, agreeably to the laws of *Plato*.”

*Puffendorf* has given a long list of other nations,  
which had the same custom among them, such as  
the antient inhabitants of *Britain*, the *Sabeans*,  
those of the kingdom of *Calecut*, the antient *Lithu-  
anians*, &c. See *Leland*, vol. ii. p. 129, note r.

*Diogenes*, whom *Epicætetus* celebrates with the epi-  
thet of *divine*, held that “ *women ought to be com-  
“ mon*”—looking upon marriage to be nothing;  
“ that every man and woman might keep company  
“ with whom they liked best, and that therefore  
“ children ought to be in common.” *Ib.* 132. So  
the *Stoics* held that *women ought to be in common* among  
the wise, 133.

“ But,

“ But, replies the stranger, suppose  
 “ there were one, how would you punish  
 “ him ?” He answered—“ The offender  
 “ must pay to the plaintiff a bull, with  
 “ a neck so long, that he might drink  
 “ out of the river *Eurotas*, from over  
 “ the top of mount *Taygeta*.” “ Why,  
 “ ’tis impossible to find such a bull, said  
 “ the man.” *Geradas* smiling replied—  
 “ ’Twas just as impossible to find an  
 “ adulterer in *Sparta*.” It is endless to  
 observe on the total blindness of such  
 people, with respect to the *law of God* :  
 but when the *Corinthians* were awakened  
 to a sense of *divine* things, though, as well  
 as others in that part of *Greece*, they had  
 been \* infected with this *Spartan* leaven,  
 and followed the *practices*, as they had im-  
 bibed the principles of their *neighbours* ;  
 yet neither custom, example, nor preju-  
 dice of education, could silence, or any  
 longer satisfy their consciences, and there-  
 fore they seem to have written to the *apostle*,  
 to know his sense of the matter ; which  
 he clearly gives them in the words of the  
 text, and which evidently reprobate this

\* *Lycurgus* established his laws in *Lacedæmon* al-  
 most 900 years before CHRIST, so that they had  
 full time to circulate and grow into customs, not  
 only in *Greece*, but also in many other parts of the  
 world.

horrid \* custom. Having, in the preceding chapter, discussed at large the subjects of *whoredom* and *fornication*, and lewdness in general, he begins this seventh chapter with an answer to the particular questions proposed to him in the letter which he had received from them. The passage may be thus paraphrased:—*Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me*—“ I say, first in general, though  
 “ not for the reasons which some of your  
 “ *philosophers* have given, nor for those  
 “ which the *Gnostics* have suggested, as if  
 “ marriage was *wrong* or *sinful in itself*,  
 “ but for *prudential* reasons, arising from  
 “ the situation of things at this time  
 “ (ver. 26.) *it is good, καλόν, useful, profitable* (ver. 8 and 26.) *for a man not*  
 “ *to touch a woman*—to have no dealings  
 “ with the *other* † *sex*. (See Matt. xix.

\* By the manner of St. Paul's expressing himself, 1 Cor. v. 1. he seems to insinuate, that, one man's taking or having another's wife, was a matter by no means unheard of amongst the Gentiles; though a man's having his father's wife was.

See an instance of this sort of degeneracy among the Jews, Amos ii. 7.

† *μὴ ἀγγίζειν γυναῖκα* is construed, by some learned men, by *ducere uxorem*—to marry a wife;—but I rather think our translation right—*not to touch a woman*—for, as the word *ἄνθρωπος* denotes *man* in a general sense, so, to make both parts of the sentence correspond with each other, the *γυναῖκα* must be general also.



“ 11, 12. *But with respect to the † for-*  
 “ *nications* you mention, and concerning  
 “ which you desire to know my senti-  
 “ ments; I answer, conformably to the  
 “ law of God, which ordains, that a man  
 “ *shall cleave to his wife, &c.* (Gen. ii. 24.)  
 “ and that no woman shall *depart from*  
 “ *her husband*, and *go to another man* (see  
 “ Rom. vii. 1, 2, 3). *Let every man have*  
 “ *his wife*—την γυναῖκα ἐαυτοῦ—the woman  
 “ who belongs to him—and not lend  
 “ her out, or suffer her to marry another,  
 “ nor let him take a woman who is not  
 “ γυναῖκα ἐαυτοῦ, *his wife*, but another man’s,

† There is no necessity to restrain the word *πορνείας* in this place, as our translators seem to have done, to the idea of what is usually meant by that term, that is to say, *commerce with harlots*; for it is a general word, expressive of *adultery*, as well as what is called *fornication*. Thus the *apostle* uses it but a little before in this very *epistle*, chap. v. 1. to denote not only *adultery*, but also *incest*. It is used as signifying *adultery*, Matt. v. 32. xix. 9; for though it may there signify lewdness committed before marriage, but not found out till afterwards, yet it must necessarily also be understood to mean such acts done after marriage; for our LORD cannot be supposed to mean that the *former* was a just cause of *divorce*, and not the *latter*—so that the word *πορνεία* must include *both*. *πορνείας* being plural, well denotes the complicated crimes of the husband’s lending his wife to another man, and the wife’s going to another man besides her husband, including also the crime of him who took her.

“ to

“ to himself. *So also let every married*  
 “ *woman have her own proper husband—*  
 “ *τον ιδιον ανδρα*—the man appropriated to  
 “ her, exclusively of all other men upon  
 “ earth, and not depart, or suffer her-  
 “ self to be *lent* or *given* to any other  
 “ man.”

I would here observe, that there is a very remarkable difference of expression, which, though preserved in many other translations, is not in ours. We render the two clauses just alike, whereas they are not so in the original, but—*την 'ΕΑΥΤΟΥ γυναικα*, and *τον ΙΔΙΟΝ ανδρα*. The *Latin* translations preserve this difference of expression—*suam uxorem*—*proprium virum*. Leusd. ex Mont. So the old and new translations in *Beza's Testament*, and *Barker's Eng. Test.* 1615, and the *Geneva*, 1557. *Let every man have HIS WIFE, and every woman her OWN husband. If all scripture be given by inspiration of God, (2 Tim. iii. 16.) and holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, (2 Pet. i. 21.)* I cannot but think that there is some weighty reason for the difference of expression, in giving the epithet *Ιδιον* to the *husband*, with respect to the *wife*, and not to the *wife*, with respect to the *husband*. This is observable, not

only in this place, but in \* many others. Eph. v. 24, 25. τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, *their own husbands*—τὰς γυναῖκας ἑαυτῶν, *your wives*;—and ver. 28, τὰς ἑαυτῶν γυναῖκας, *their wives*—τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα, *his wife*.—Again, Col. iii. 18, 19. τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν—*propriis viris*—*their own husbands*—τὰς γυναῖκας, *your wives* (ἑαυτῶν being understood). St. Peter, who was the apostle of the circumcision, uses the same mode of expression, 1 Pet. iii. 1. *Let the wives be subject, τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν—propriis viris—to their own husbands.* The word ἴδιος has certainly an emphatical meaning wherever we find it, therefore must have its emphasis in this place, as well as in others. It seems to denote such an *appropriation* of the husband to the wife, as that she could not have, or go to any other man. This idea may be illustrated from Rom. xiv. 4. *Who art thou that judgest*

\* Rom. viii. 32. we meet with a very material proof of the *emphatical* import of the word ἴδιος, to denote CHRIST's being God's *own proper son*, in such a sense as no creature is or can be. So, in the passage under consideration, the word ἴδιος denotes that the man is the woman's husband, in such a sense as no other man is or can be. CHRIST, John v. 18, is said to call God ἴδιον Πατέρα—His *own proper Father*:—this must be in a sense as exclusive of all other beings, as the ἴδιος ἀνὴρ is exclusive of all other men.

*another*



another man's servant? τῷ ἰδίῳ κυρίῳ—*proprio domino—to his own master he standeth or falleth.* Here ἰδιος is used as an epithet to the master with respect to the servant (as 1 Tim. vi. 1. Tit. ii. 9.) and must denote such an appropriation of the master to the servant, as to exempt the servant from the authority, power, controul, command, or service of any other, but that of his own (Idis) master; for, as was observed before, *no man can serve two masters*, though the master may have many servants; nor is any of his servants the less so, because he has others. So here, 1 Cor. vii. 2. and the other passages referred to, the husband is styled ἰδιον, to denote that *no other man* can have any power, propriety, or interest whatsoever in the society of the wife, but the ἰδιος ἀνὴρ, the proper and appropriated husband. I own that I can account for this difference of expression in no other way, than by supposing the *scripture* consistent with itself, and that the distinction so evident in the Old Testament, was to be preserved throughout the New Testament—that though a man might have *more than one wife*, yet a woman could have but *one husband*; had she more, neither could be styled properly ἰδιος ἀνὴρ, for she would be as much the property of

one as of the other, or rather be *in common* between, or amongst them, according to their number; whereas, doubtless, though a man has *two wives*, each may be properly styled *γυνή ἐαυτοῦ*—\* *his wife*. No man may be said to have an *exclusive* property in, or appropriation of himself to, a person, or thing, which others may share with him: therefore the word *ιδίος* is peculiarly adapted to denote the *exclusive* appropriation of the *husband to the wife* to be, like the *exclusive* appropriation of the *master to the servant*, such a one as gives to him *alone*, exclusive of all others, the whole *attention, obedience, and service* of the party, so long as the relation which requires these shall continue. Whereas *γυνή*, *wife*, is never found with the *exclusive* *ιδίος*, but coupled only with the pronoun possessive *ἐαυτῆς*. To illustrate what has been said, we may observe as to *Jacob* and his two wives, *Leah* and *Rachel*, *Rachel* as well as *Leah*, with respect to *Jacob*, was *γυνή ἐαυτῆς*, *his wife* (Gen. xxx. 26. xxxi. 50.) and he the *ιδίος ἀνὴρ*, the *husband*, exclusively of all other men,

\* The propriety of this can hardly be disputed, when we reflect that it is the constant language of the Old Testament.

*appropriated*

*appropriated to both, inſomuch that neither could have gone to any other man, without being an adulterefs: but we nowhere find Jacob, nor any other polyga-miſt, ſigmatized as an adulterer or forni-cator, on account of his having two wives. That ſuch a cuſtom as Plutarch ſhews to have originated from the famous law-giver of Sparta, ſhould reach Corinth, which ſtood at the edge of Peloponneſus, is not at all ſurprizing, when we find it had even reached to \* Rome. Cato of Utica actually gave his wife Marcia to his friend Hortenſius, and himſelf aſſiſted at the wedding.*

The words of the text clearly apply to the forbidding ſo monſtrous a breach of the law of marriage, and apply equally to polygamy as to monogamy. *Abigail and Abinoam* were, with reſpect to *David*, each of them *γυνὴ ἐαυτοῦ, his wife*—for the

\* In ſhort, this cuſtom of lending wives to each other was ſo common among the *Gentiles*, that it is inconceivable ſuch a practice ſhould not be among the *Corinthians*. *Cæſar* tells us of the antient *Britains*—“Ten or twelve of them have wives in com-mon amongſt them—but every woman’s children  
“ are accounted his, who firſt poſſeſſed her when  
“ a virgin; ſo many men, having each of them mar-ried his proper wife, afterwards agreed upon that  
“ friendly way of poſſeſſing them.” *De B. G. lib. v.* Much more to the ſame purpoſe may be found in *Puffendorf*, book vi. c. 1. § 15.



*Holy Ghost* saith, 1 Sam. xxv. 43. *they were both of them his wives*: and therefore he was the *idios dñs*, the peculiar, proper, appropriated husband to both. If DAVID had taken *another man's wife*, or either of them had been lent out or given to another man, this would have fallen directly under the interdict of the *apostle*, who here says no more than is exactly consonant with the *law of Moses*.

Saying that this text forbids *polygamy*, because the word *wife* is in the singular number, is mere trifling; as much so, as contending that a man is to love but *one \* neighbour*, because it is said, *Thou*

\* We meet with numberless passages in the scripture, where the *singular* is not to be understood *exclusively*, that is, so as not to include the *plural*, but *distributively* so as to include it. Witness the passages referred to, as also the *fourth* commandment—“Thou shalt do no manner of work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor the stranger that is within thy gates.” Are we to gather from hence, that a man is to have but *one son*, *one daughter*, *one man-servant*, *one maid-servant*, &c.? So the ninth commandment—“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”—Endless are the examples of this sort, which might be brought, to shew that, in many instances, the *singular* number cannot be confined to an *exclusive* sense, but must, of necessity, be extended *distributively*, so as to include *many*, and indeed *all* of the kind which is spoken of: and in this sense the word *wife* must be understood, 1 Cor. vii. 2, in order to make the text harmonize with the Old Testament.

*shalt*

*shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; not neighbours; or that he shall keep but one servant, because it is said, Rom. xiv. 4. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant, in the singular number, not servants, in the plural: or to argue for polygamy, because it is said, 1 Cor. vii. 29. they that have wives, and not every one that has a wife. All such literal or verbal criticism is mere word-catching, far below the dignity of fair argument, and deserves nothing but contempt.*

Those who represent the *apostle* as addressing himself to *single* persons, and advising them to marry, *to avoid fornication*, make him guilty of evident *tautology*—for the eighth verse is expressly addressed to the *unmarried* and *widows*. After wishing that all, like himself, could live *unmarried* (that they might have less distraction in their attendance on the service of God, ver. 35.) he adds—*but if they cannot contain let them marry, for it is better to marry than burn—* *πυρρῶσαι*, *to be fired, to be on fire*—(comp. *Cant. viii. 6. Hos. vii. 4.*) that is, with *lust*, or unchaste desires, by which they might be driven into the commission of *fornication*, and all *manner of uncleanness*;—which is, in effect, saying the same thing over again, as some would have him

him to say at the *second* verse, the very terms of which shew it to be addressed to *married persons*; for how could the *apostle* say to a *single man*—let him have—ἐχέτω, retain—γυνᾱμα ἑαυτῆς, his wife; or to a *single woman*—let her have, i. e. keep to—τον ἰδίον ἀνδρα, her own husband? The immediate connection of this verse with the three following, which can belong to *married people only*, is another strong argument for the truth of this observation. Besides, if we understand the ἕνας, every man, and the ἑνας, every woman, to relate here to any but the *married people*, it may seem to make the *apostle* command every one to marry, whether they chuse it or not, contrary to ver. 7, 8. The word ἕνας is certainly *relative*, and must agree with some *masculine* substantive understood: this can be, (agreeably to the rest of the verse) nothing but ἀνρ, which, in the last clause, must signify *husband*—τον ἰδίον ἀνδρα, her own husband, and so in the *four times* it is used in the two following verses. The word ἑνας is also *relative*, and must agree with some *feminine* substantive understood; this can be no other than γυν, which, in this verse, is rendered *wife*; and so the *four times* it is used in the following verses. If the ἀνρ and γυν which  
are



are *understood*, had been rendered as they are uniformly in the rest of the *context*, all difficulty in understanding, and all disputes about, the *apostle's* meaning had been saved, and the *evil alluded to* reprobated in as plain terms as the *apostle* intended it should; for the verse would have stood thus—*Let every husband* (or married man) *have his wife*—*γυναικα ἑαυτου*, the wife that belongs to him—and *every wife* (or married woman) *have her own husband*.

When he addresses himself to *single persons*, and advises them to *marry* to *avoid fornication* (which is certainly the meaning of ver. 9.) he does not use a *doubtful periphrasis*, but speaks the matter in the common usual phrase—*γαμισάτωσαν*—*let them marry*. There is something remarkable also at the tenth and eleventh verses, where, in answer to some question put to him in the *Corinthians* letter, probably about *married persons*, who were in a state of *separation*, he says—*Let not the wife depart from her husband, but if she depart*—*μενέτω ἄγαμος*—*let her remain unmarried*. Comp. Rom. vii. 3. and 1 Cor. vii. 39. This is said to be the *command of God*, ver. 10; how is it that it is not extended to the husband? It is only said—*Let not the husband put away*

away his wife. Had he construed Matt. xix. 9. by the *sound* instead of the *sense*, he most probably would have said of the husband also, *μενέτω ἄγαμος*, let him remain unmarried, in case of her departure, or of his putting her away.

But as those false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of CHRIST, 2 Cor. xi. 13. had, by their erroneous and monstrous doctrines, saying, "that all marriage was of the Devil" (for such was the doctrine of the Gnostics) sadly distressed the consciences of weak people, and led them to think, that, as marriage was a *sinful* thing, therefore all conjugal intercourse between married people must be *sinful* too, we find the apostle proceeding, ver. 3, to answer that part of the letter which related to their distress on this account. But, so far from deeming the intercourse of married persons wrong, he says—"Let the husband render unto the wife *due benevolence*, " Ὁφειλούμεν ἐννοίαν (which answers to "the *נווי* of Moses, Exod. xxi. 10. and "which we decently render *duty of marriage*) and likewise the wife unto the husband. The wife has not power over her own body, so as to withdraw herself entirely from the conjugal debt, but the husband may, as a matter of right, " have

“ have access to her at all proper times and  
 “ seasons. Likewise *the husband has not*  
 “ *the power* (ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ) *of his own body,*  
 “ so as to withdraw from the conjugal  
 “ intercourse with his wife, *but the*  
 “ *wife,* as a debt due from the contract  
 “ which the man is under to her, by the  
 “ very terms of their union, has a right  
 “ to his society. *Therefore, defraud ye not one the*  
 “ *other,* μὴ ἀποστερεῖτε ἀλλήλους, *do not de-*  
 “ *prive or wrong each other in these re-*  
 “ *spects,* under a false notion of its be-  
 “ *ing sinful to come together as man*  
 “ *and wife.* There may be *times,* in-  
 “ deed, when both may find it expe-  
 “ dient, and therefore both consent to  
 “ separate for a while; as on occasion of  
 “ particular abstinence and devotion:  
 “ but let not even this exceed the bounds  
 “ of prudence, lest, if it should, *Satan*  
 “ should take the advantage of you, and  
 “ tempt you to gratify, in an unlawful  
 “ way, those desires which may lawfully  
 “ be satisfied between married persons.  
 “ However, I do not insist upon the mat-  
 “ ter of your parting, even for a season, by  
 “ way of *commandment,* κατ’ ἐπιταγὴν, but  
 “ by way of *permission,* κατὰ συγγνώμην.”  
 See 2 Cor. viii. 10.

I take



I take the ὀφειλομένην εὐνοίαν of *Paul* to answer exactly to the word נָעַן which is rendered *duty of marriage*. This is mentioned by *Moses* to be still due to the *first wife*, though a man take a *second*. *Exod.* xxi. 10. Therefore this passage of *St. Paul* no more concludes against *polygamy*, than that of *Moses*, which actually supposes it. The root נָעַן means to *act upon some person or thing*—and, in *Kal*, to *lie with a woman*, *Gen.* xxxiv. 2. *Deut.* xxi. 14. *Deut.* xxii. 24, 29: so that by comparing scripture with scripture, we shall find one part explain the other. There is a similarity of expression between *Moses* and *Paul*, which, I own, makes me think that the *latter* copied the sentiments of the *former*, upon the subjects before us. *Moses* saith לא יגרע וענתה her duty of marriage he shall not withhold—*subtract*—*withdraw*—*keep back* from her. *Paul* says—let the husband render to the wife due benevolence—ὀφειλομένην εὐνοίαν—which is saying the same thing, in other words indeed, but with the same meaning. To render to another their due is not to withhold it; and not to withhold it is to render it. *Paul* says, μη ἀποσπεριτε—*Moses* says לא גרע which the LXX actually translate ἐκ ἀποσπέρσει. This is the very identical verb which we translate *defraud*

*defraud not.* נָרַע signifies to *subtract* or *withdraw*—to *withhold* or *keep back*;—the Greek ἀποσῆναι has the *same meaning*—so that *Paul* may be said to translate, just as the LXX have done, the נָרַע of *Moses*. The only shadow of difference between the *Jewish law-giver*, and the *Christian apostle*, consists in the explicitness of the latter, and conciseness of the former. *Moses's* words imply what *Paul's* declare, and, *vice versa*, *Paul* declares what is implied by *Moses*. If the *husband* is not to withhold the *marriage-duty* from the *wife*, this must imply that the *wife* is not to withhold it from the *husband*. There must be a parity of reason in both cases. Neither *husband* nor *wife* can have any such power over their own bodies. This is plainly said by *Paul*, and, in consistence with the *law of marriage*, must evidently be meant by *Moses*. For my own part, I as much believe that *Paul* had the doctrine in *Exod. xxi. 10.* in his mind, when he \* wrote that part of

\* On looking into *Pole Syn.* in 1 Cor. vii. 3. I find him of the same opinion—"Respexit hic "*Paulus* locum illum, *Ex. xxi. 10.* ibi enim idem "*quod hic marito præcipitur.*" "*Paul* here "*looked back to that place in Exod. xxi. 10.*" "*for there the same thing is commanded to the "*husband as here."

the answer to the *Corinthians* letter, wherein he solved their difficulties about the *intercourse* of married people, as it is now in my mind, while I am writing these words; and thus, upon good authority, even that of the mind of God as delivered by *Moses*, he could be so peremptory in declaring that *such intercourse* was *duty* on both sides, and therefore could not (as the *Gnostic* doctrine might have led them to suppose) be a *sin*.

*St. Paul*, who, before his conversion, had profited in the *Jews* religion above many his equals in his own nation, *Gal. i. 14.* could hardly, after his conversion, be ignorant of the law of *Moses*; so far from it, he was, undoubtedly, a most accomplished teacher of it. Witness the masterly manner in which he explains the sense and meaning of the *moral* law, and unfolds the whole design of the *ceremonial* law. By the first, he demonstrated the necessity of the *gospel* for salvation—by the *second*, he shewed the *gospel* to have been one and the same, though under different dispensations of it, from the fall of *Adam* to the coming of *Jesus Christ*. Now to set *Paul*, as a law-giver, in *Moses'* seat, and to represent him as condemning that which was not condemned by the law of *Moses*, is to make



make him act inconsistently with his own declaration, Rom. iii. 31. *Do we make void the law through faith?—God forbid! yea—we establish the law.* It is to make him transgress the law, by despising that solemn sanction, which equally forbade adding to it, or diminishing from it; and to put him in much the same situation with those, whether men or angels, who preached any other gospel than that which he preached; for to preach any other law than that which was given by MOSES, is as great an offence as to preach any other gospel than that which came by JESUS CHRIST. This we may learn from the very words of the law itself. Deut. iv. 2, xii. 32.

Dr. Whitby, a very laborious and learned commentator, in his comment on —the husband, ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ, hath not power of his own body, &c. says — “ Here is a plain \* argument against polygamy.”

\* “ Sane patres Tridentini,” saith one, “ si adhuc in vivis essent, ipsis immortales agerent gratias, quod a scripturis anathematis in polygamos vibrati justitiam atque æquitatem defenderint, eaque præstiterint quæ ipsi ne quidem audere voluerint.”

“ Truly the fathers of the council of Trent, if they were yet alive, would give immortal thanks to those who should defend, out of the holy scripture, the justice and equity of their curse  
VOL. I. R “ brandished

“ *gamy*.” That here is a plain argument to prove that he shall not withhold the *duty of marriage* from the wife, and that, in this respect, *neither shall defraud* or withhold from the other, on proper occasions, the *conjugal debt*, is very certain. But as what is here said, is founded in the very *nature and essence* of the *marriage-relation*, it must equally concern all that ever have married, or shall marry, to the end of the world, as well under the Old Testament as the New Testament; it bears equally hard, if it be an argument against *polygamy*, on the man who, having *one* wife, *took another* in the days of *Moses*, as on any one who should do so at this hour (for certainly the marriage-relation must always be the same) and will prove much more against certain *distinguished characters* under the Old Testament, than I dare say the author meant it should. When learned and pious men find out “ plain “ arguments” against things which are not mentioned, or even hinted at, in the *text*, it is a shrewd sign that \* *prejudice*,  
and

“ brandished against *polygamists*, and who should  
“ do that, which they themselves would not even  
“ dare to attempt.”

\* How this learned man’s *prejudices* warred against his *judgment* (like many others who want to support a pre-conceived opinion, against the *truth* which  
would

and not *judgment*, dictates the *comment*. The *Corinthians* had a very "plain argument" against their fears about married persons *cobabiting* together; and if they compared this scripture, ver. 3, 4, with what *Moses* so positively laid down, Exod. xxi. 10. the *polygamists* among them were no more to forsake the company of *their wives*, so as to withhold the *duty of marriage*, than those who had but *one wife* were to withdraw themselves from *her society* in the *same* respect.

That there were many *polygamists* among the *Gentile* converts, as well as

would overturn it) may be seen from the concession he falls into, in his note on Mark x. 11. in the following words—"Since to commit adultery is to  
 " violate the bed of another person, he that commits adultery against his wife, must violate her  
 " bed, which no husband can do only by doing  
 " that which an husband lawfully might do. Since  
 " then a right to *polygamy*, is a right to marry more  
 " wives than one, he that hath this right, cannot  
 " violate the bed of his first wife, by assuming another to it. It *therefore must be acknowledged*, either  
 " that the husband, under CHRIST's institution,  
 " and by the original law of matrimony, had no  
 " such right, or that he that marrieth another  
 " cannot, by that, commit adultery against his first  
 " wife." Here is a fair ISSUE IN LAW joined—and must be tried by THE LAW—for CHRIST made no *institution* whatsoever on the subject of *marriage*, but only *declared*, *explained*, and *inforced* those already made and recorded in the LAW *which was given by MOSES*. This LAW, like all other RECORDS, is to be tried by ITSELF—taking the WHOLE TOGETHER.



among the *Jewish*, there can be but little doubt; for, as \* *Grotius* observes—*Inter Paganos paucae gentes una uxore contentae fuerunt*—"Among the *Pagans*, few "nations were content with one wife;" and we do not find the *apostle* making this any bar to *church-membership*, though he expressly does to *church offices*. See before, p. 200. It can hardly be supposed, that if *polygamy* were sinful, that is to say, an offence against the law of God, the great *apostle* should be so liberal and so particular, in his epistle to the *Corinthians*, in the condemnation of every other species of illicit commerce between the sexes, and yet omit this in the black catalogue, chap. vi. 9, &c. or that he

\* *De Verit.* lib. ii. § 13. So *De Jure*, lib. ii. cap. 5. § 9. he says—"Sed & apud Græcos, CECROPS primus, teste Athenæo, *μίαν ἐνὶ ἐζευξεν*, "unam fæminam uni marito attribuit: quod tamen ne Athenis quidem diu observatum Socratis & aliorum exemplo docemur." But among the *Greeks*, CECROPS first, as *Athenæus* witnesseth, allowed one woman to one man; which, nevertheless, was not long observed, even at *ATHENS*, as we are taught by the example of *SOCRATES* and others.

παλαι γὰρ ἐβίβισαν καὶ Ἕλληνες, καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι, καὶ δύο καὶ τρισὶ, καὶ πλεονεὶ γυναῖξι νόμῳ γαμὸς κατὰ ταύτων συνοικεῖν. Theodoret—cited by *Whitby*, on 1 Tim. iii. 2.

"The *Jews* and *Greeks* were wont to be married "to TWO or THREE, and even MORE wives together."

should

should not be as zealous for the honour of the *law of marriage*, and of the *seventh commandment*, which was evidently to maintain it, as *Ezra* was for that positive law of Deut. vii. 3, against the marrying with *heathens*. *Ezra* made the *Jews* put away the wives which they had illegally taken, and even the very *children* which they had by them; How is it that *Paul*, if *polygamy* was sinful, did not make the *Gentile* and the *Jewish* converts put away every wife but the *first*, and annul every *polygamous contract*? Why not say, that being the *husband of one wife* was as necessary to the being a *Christian*, as to be chosen a *Bishop* or *Deacon*? for it certainly was, if *polygamy* be *sinful*. *John the Baptist*, at the expence of his liberty, and afterwards of his life, honestly, openly, in words that it was out of the reach of all commentators to sophisticate, or give more than one meaning to, told *Herod*, with respect to *Herodias*, his brother *Philip's* wife—*It is not lawful for thee to have her*. But how could *Paul*, with truth, say to the *Ephesians*, the *Corinthians*, or any other people amongst whom he ministered—I have not shunned to declare unto you, *πασαν την βουλην*, ALL (the whole) *counsel of God*—if *polygamy* were a sin, and he did not as openly and

plainly declare against it, as he did against every other fleshly transgression of God's *pure and holy* law? That he has nowhere done this, I may say—*res ipsa indicat*.

As for taking a *text* here or there, detaching it from the *context*, and the *context* itself from the rest of the *Bible*; then chusing out a single *sentence*, or *word* in a *sentence*, this too without any reference to the original *Hebrew* or *Greek*, and because it seems to *sound that way*, to make it a proof of some opinion we have been taught to hold; it is that sort of criticism which may make the scripture prove any thing, and every thing, just as fancy leads, and, in short, must render the scriptures themselves as vague and indeterminate as the minds of men are.

Whoever has read the history of that renowned worthy, Alderman *Whittington*, whose *biographer* tells us that he was twice *Lord Mayor of London*, may recollect a circumstance in that *great* man's life, which affords an exemplification of the aptness which possesses the human mind, to interpret *sounds* into that particular *sense* which its own prejudices, however imbibed, wish to put upon them. It is said that *Whittington*, being an apprentice in the *city*, left his master with



with an intent to go into the *country*. It being about the time of evening, he sat himself down somewhere in the skirts of the town; his ear was caught with the ringing of *six bells*, he listened attentively to them, 'till at last he persuaded himself that they proclaimed his future greatness in the following *sounds*:

I    2   3   4   5   6  
 “ Turn again *Whittington*,

I    2   3   4   5   6  
 “ Lord Mayor of *London*.”

He was so captivated with the conceit, that he not only imagined the *bells* \* said this to him, but that all who heard them must give their *peal* the same interpretation; and, no doubt, under such a prepossession, it would have been almost impossible to have persuaded him to the contrary.

So, when men have been brought up under the prejudices of *vulgar opinion* and *common error*, and have their minds swayed and biassed by long custom to one certain

\* “ We have an homely English proverb, which says—‘ As the fool thinks, the bell clinks’—  
 “ A proverb applicable, in our opinion, to all arguments founded on the *sound*, and arbitrary meaning of words.” Lond. Review for 1778, page 75.

train of thinking, they have but to meet with a text in scripture which seems to echo to their *sense* of things, that *sense* will immediately chime in with the *sound*; and both together, almost beyond the power of conviction to the contrary, confirm them still more strongly in their sentiments. What these may happen to be, makes very little difference—whether it be *transubstantiation*—praying to saints—worshipping images—the doctrine of *purgatory*—or, “though *polygamy* was “*allowed under the law*, it is forbidden “*under the gospel*”—or, in short, any other popular prejudice: they will always act towards scripture as *Whittington* did with *the bells*, till that liberality of mind, which ought to possess us, as the privilege of thinking and reasonable beings, opens the way to *free enquiry*—then, and not till then, we shall be *noble* like the *Bereans*, Acts xvii. 11. who would no longer be led by their own prejudices, or prejudiced by other people's opinions, but *received the word of God with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things* (which they heard preached by *Paul*) *were so*. The scriptures which these *Jews* at *Berea* searched so *diligently*, must have been the scriptures of the Old Testament;

ment; no others, if written, could then have come to their hands; but they compared the New Testament as preached by *Paul*, with the Old Testament of *Moses and the prophets*, that they might judge whether the things he declared to them were of divine authority, answerable to former revelations of God's mind and will, or not. This is the method which I have endeavoured to observe throughout this book, and which I most sincerely recommend to every reader, as well as to every person who wishes to *know* and to *do* the will of God. If once we detach the New Testament from the Old Testament, there is not a single *heresy* that will not find something to say for itself, perhaps more than we may be able very easily to answer. But let us carry what we hear to the Old Testament; if it exactly tallies with that, we may be sure it is a right interpretation of the New Testament; if otherwise, it must be false, because the mind and will of God can never vary, disagree with, or contradict itself. I do not say these things with regard to any particular doctrine of the New Testament, but with respect to the whole. The doctrine of a *Trinity in unity*—the *incarnation*—*birth*—*life*—*teaching*—*miracles*—*sufferings*—*death*—*burial*



*burial—resurrection—ascension—glorification*, and *intercession* of *Jesus Christ*, together with the aspect these things bear towards the salvation of mankind, if only related in a book, no single article of which was ever heard or thought of for *four thousand* years together, would challenge no more of my assent or belief, than the *Koran* of *Mahomet*, the *Zend* or *Zend-avesta* of *Confucius*, or the *Shaster* of the *Bramins*. But when I compare these things with what is contained in the Old Testament, to which the New Testament so often refers for their truth, I then can no more suppose them to be false, than I can suppose it possible for men to see into futurity, exactly delineate what is to happen ages before it comes to pass, and so exactly, as that the event shall be a literal fulfilment of all that is foretold, unless *He* who is *perfect in knowledge* hath made a revelation or discovery of things which no mortal wisdom or foresight could have ever otherwise been acquainted with. Therefore, when we compare the New Testament with the Old, we may be assured that it is as impossible to be false, as that a *dozen dice* should be thrown the same number for a million times running; no hazard or casualty could bring such a thing

2

within

within the most acute calculation of chance; therefore I conclude, that nothing short of *infinite wisdom* and *divine contrivance* could ever first *declare*, and then *fulfil*, the wondrous things which are written in *Moses* and the *prophets*. When therefore I hear of a doctrine as taught in the New Testament, I am certain, if it be true, it must accord with the scriptures of the Old Testament. Thither I carry it; if I find it does not exactly *tally* with what I find there, I am certain it is false, and must arise from some misconception, and, of course, some misinterpretation of the passage where it is supposed to be found. I am told that *sin is a transgression of the law*; when I hear it asserted that *polygamy* is *sinful*, I consult *the law*; if it be forbidden *there*, I agree to the *sinfulness* of it; if not forbidden there, but \* *allowed*, I find myself reduced to this *dilemma*—either the asserter of such a proposition, who says he takes it from the New Testament, is *mistaken*, which is *probable*, or the New Testament must *contradict the law*, which is *impossible*.

\* “ *Lex Hebræa omnem spurcitiam inhibet, sed  
 “ plures uni concedit uxores.*” GROTIUS. “ The  
 “ *Jewish* law restrains all filthiness, but allows a  
 “ plurality of wives to one man.”

With

With respect to what is frequently urged against *polygamy* among *Christians*, that “ though it was allowed by the *law* “ of *Moses*, yet it is *forbidden by the law of* “ *Christ*”—by which CHRIST is made a repealer of the *old*, and a giver of a *new law*—it so affects His character as the *Messiah*, as to render Him, if it be true, *not* the person which *Moses* and the *prophets* represent Him, or what He represented Himself to be. The discussion, therefore, of this *horrid position* requires, and shall have, a *chapter* by itself.

At present, I will advert to an argument taken from the New Testament to prove the unlawfulness of *polygamy* among *Christians*, though *allowed* to the *Jews* under the Old Testament. *St. Paul*, Eph. vi. 32. and in some other passages, represents marriage as a figure or representation of *Christ* and *His church*, which is but *one*: whereas, having *more wives* than one at a time, destroys the *analogy* which the marriage-state bears to CHRIST and *His church*. In answer to which, I would ask, If CHRIST and *His church* were not as much *one* under the Old Testament as under the New Testament? Is. liv. 5. *Thy Maker is thine husband, the LORD of Hosts is his name; the GOD of the whole earth shall He be called.* The  
church,



*church*, taken *collectively*, is but *one* ; but *distributively*, it consists of *many*. Rom. xii. 5. *We being many, are one body in CHRIST*—and 1 Cor. xii. 12. *For as the body is ONE, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so also is CHRIST*. So that the argument against *polygamy*, taken from the *union* and *unity* of CHRIST and His *church*, rather leans the other way ; unless, contrary to scripture and fact, it could be proved that the *church* consisted but of *one member* ; whereas it consists of *many*, and yet is but *one body*—*one household*—Eph. ii. 19. *One family*, even tho' the *saints in heaven* be also taken into the account. Eph. iii. 15. The *bride* or *spouse* of CHRIST is but *one*—i. e. *one church* ; yet every member of that *church* is as distinctly the *spouse* of CHRIST, as really *married to Him that rose from the dead* (Rom. vii. 4.) as the *whole* is, collectively considered. Surely these scriptural illustrations of the nature of the marriage-bond, afford a complete answer to that question, “ If a man hath *two wives*, “ how can he be *one flesh* with *both*— “ or *each one flesh* with him ? ” See Eph. v. 30.

We also read not only of the *church* of *Christ* in the *singular* number, but of the *churches*

*churches of Christ* in the *plural*, about forty times in the New Testament; which, by the way, is at least as conclusive an argument for *polygamy*, as the other is *against* it.

From the making CHRIST and *His church* an emblem of *marriage*, or *marriage* an emblem of CHRIST and *His church*, some have looked upon it as a *sacrament*. There is certainly an *outward sign* of something *spiritual*; but as there wants that which is essentially necessary to make it a *sacrament*, which is God's own appointment of it as such, the more scriptural professors of *Christianity* reject it. For the same reason I would reject those arguments against *polygamy*, which are drawn from the *union of Christ and His church*, because God has no where established their authority (that I can find) either in the Old Testament or the *New*. These arguments would have been just as conclusive under the *former* as under the *latter*. The *church* is called the *married wife*. *Is. liv. 1. Her REDEEMER, the LORD of hosts, is called her Husband, ver. 5;* but never did *Isaiab*, nor any other of the *prophets*, use this as an argument against the *polygamy* of the people. If this was not done, or so much as hinted at, under the Old Testament, why are we

we to conceive it to be done under the *New*, when the same things and persons are equally represented under both?

Had *polygamy* been intended to have been condemned under the New-Testament dispensation, I should humbly suppose that OUR LORD would have put the matter out of question by words too plain to admit of the least dispute: that He *whose loins were girt about with faithfulness* (Is. xi. 5.) would have been at least as *faithful* to His hearers of *the lost sheep of the house of ISRAEL*, to whom He was so immediately sent (Matt. xv. 24.) and spoken to them in as *plain* and *unequivocal terms* as *John the Baptist* did to *Herod*, upon the subject of *his brother Philip's wife* (Matt. xiv. 4.) There cannot be the least doubt, that numbers of our LORD's *multitudes of hearers* were *polygamists*, all in *principle*—*many* in *practice*; nor can it be doubted, that if this was against the *law of marriage*, the law of the *seventh commandment*, or any other *positive law* of GOD, it must be a mortal, damnable \* *fin*, involving the *man* as well as the *woman*

\* *St. Augustine*, lib. xxii. c. 47. against *Faustus*, says of *polygamy*—"Quando mos erat crimen non erat."—"When it was a custom, it was no crime."—How this great man could be capable of



woman in destruction and perdition. Paul could declare openly, that if a woman, living her husband, be married to another, she

of such an absurdity is astonishing.—The idea of a sinful act losing its criminality from custom, or the frequency of the commission of it, leaves little room for God's command, Exod. xxiii. 2. *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil. Nunc propterea crimen est, saith he, quia mos non est.*—"Now it is a crime, because not customary."

St. Chrysostom's account of the matter is much more consistent with scripture and common sense, when, speaking of Abraham and Hagar, he says — *ἐδὲ πῶ γὰρ ταῦτα τότε κεκωλύθη* — *These things were not then forbidden.* Indeed Augustine, in other parts of his writings, speaks much in the same manner. "There was (says he) a blameless custom of one man having many wives—for there are many things which at that time might be done in a way of duty, which now cannot be done but licentiously—because, for the sake of multiplying posterity, no law forbade a plurality of wives." See Grot. de Jur. vol. i. p. 268. note <sup>b</sup>

St. Austin, like others of the fathers, seems to have supposed that the command, *Be fruitful and multiply*—and the allowance of polygamy, as a means of fulfilling it, went hand in hand together:—that as that command—"Ratione multitudinis liberorum, pertinet ad tempora ante CHRISTUM; non ad nos qui alio vivimus ævo—quia hodie, repleto mundo, non tam necessarium sit quam olim—mundum non desiderare illud *crescite & multiplicamini*"—therefore the allowance of polygamy ceased with the necessity of the command which it accompanied.

Thus, as is usual, one absurdity beget another. Those who could be persuaded, that the command  
for

*she shall be called an adulteress, and vouches the law of God for his authority, Rom. vii. 1, 2, 3. How is it that CHRIST did not openly say the same thing on the part of the man?—Because, if He had, He could not have vouched the law of God for His authority; and for the same reason that he could not say it, he could not think it, for God's law was within his heart, Ps. xl. 8. and no thought could ever be in the pure and perfect heart of CHRIST, but what was exactly conformable, in all things, to the pure and perfect law of God. Let us then carry what OUR LORD saith against divorce, Matt. xix. 9. to the law and to the testimony, and it can no more conclude against polygamy, simply considered, than it concludes against bigamy, or a man's marrying a second wife after the death of his first, and being twice married. Some of the primitive fathers cited it, to prove*

for the propagation of the human species, was only obligatory on former ages, might very consistently suppose, that even marriage itself had very little to do with *Christians*, and that therefore *polygamy* became an *evil*, which they allowed to have been a *lawful* thing, and even *duty*, in times past. Such are the *γυναικείαι μυθολογίαι*—the *aniles fabellæ*—the *old women's stories*—which the *fathers* told, till they believed them, and, on their authority, they are believed to this hour!

that every second marriage was adultery; but here their learned and pious advocate, *Dr. Cave*, does allow, that “they stretched the string till it cracked again.”

I might also observe, that, if *polygamy* was a sin, and even a *national* sin, an *epidemical* transgression of the law of God, it is very extraordinary that OUR LORD’S fore-runner, *John the Baptist*, who came to preach repentance, should not mention, nor even hint at it; for his commission ran thus—*Luke i. 17. To turn the hearts of the fathers unto the children, the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the LORD.*

No man could have a fairer opportunity to bear his testimony against a *national* sin, than the *Baptist* had; for it is said (*Matt. iii. 5.*) *Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan; and among the numbers who were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins* (*ver. 6.*) there were many harlots (*chap. xxi. 32.*) So that it is evident he did not spare to inveigh most sharply against the sin of *fleshly uncleanness*; had *polygamy* been of this kind, he doubtless would have preached against it, which, if he had, some trace would most probably have been left of it, as there



there is of his preaching against the sin of *whoredom*, by the *harlots* (αἱ \* πορναὶ) being said to *believe on him*; which they certainly would not have done, any more than the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* (Matt. xxi. 32.) if the preacher had not awakened them to a deep and real sense of their guilt, by setting forth the heinousness of their sin. He exerted his eloquence also against *public grievances*, such as the extortion of the public officers of the revenue—the *publicans*—τελωναὶ—*tax-gatherers*—likewise against the oppressive methods used by the *soldiery*, who made it a custom either to take people's goods by *violence*, or to *defraud* them of their property, by extorting it under the terror of *false accusation*. These were *public grievances*, against which the *Baptist* bore so open a testimony, that the *publicans* and *soldiers* came to him, saying—*What shall we do?* This being the case, is it conceivable that a man of the *Baptist's* character, who was so zealous for the honour of the law, as to reprove even a *king* to his face for *adultery*, should suffer, if *polygamy* be *adultery*, a *whole nation*, as it were, of *public adulterers* to stand before him, and not bear the least testimony

\* The word πορναι may signify *lewd women* of all sorts.

against them? I do not say this is a *conclusive*, but it is surely a very strong presumptive argument, that in the *Baptist's* views of the matter, *polygamy* and *adultery* were by no means the same thing.

Having finished, for the present, what I had to say on the subject of *polygamy*, as supposed to be condemned by the New Testament, I must return back to the Old Testament, to shew that *polygamy* was not only *allowed* in *all cases*, but in some *commanded*. The first instance of this which I shall mention, is with respect to the law, Deut. xxv. 5—10. *If brethren dwell\* together, and one of them die and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be that the first-born which she beareth, shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel, &c.*

This law must certainly be looked upon as an *exception* from the general law (Lev. xviii. 16.) and the reason of it

\* They are said to *dwell together*, not only who were in the *same family*, but in the *same country*. Gen. xiii. 5, 6.

appears in the law itself, viz. "To preserve inheritances in the families to which they belonged." This was of the utmost consequence in the designs of Providence respecting the MESSIAH, whose genealogy, with respect to his being of the seed of Abraham—the tribe of Judah—the family of David, was not more ascertained by his lineal descent, than by the preservation of Bethlehem Ephrata in the tribe of Judah and family of David. By which it came to pass, that the prophecy concerning the very place of the MESSIAH's birth was literally fulfilled (Comp. Mic. v. 2, with Matt. ii. 4, 5, 6, and Luke ii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.) The Jewish \* doctors, as Mr. Selden, in his *Uxor Hebraica*, and others after him, observe, made several exceptions to this law; but as the text makes none, I know not that we are warranted in making any. Bishop Burnet seems to have had a right view of the matter, in his observation on the generality of this law. His words are—"Yea, polygamy was made, in some cases, a duty by Moses's law; when any died without issue, his brother, or

\* Their comments on the *Old Testament* are about as much to be depended upon, in general, as the *Papish* comments upon the *New*. See *Fulk. on Rhemish Testament*—per tot.



“ nearest kinsman, was to marry his  
 “ wife, for raising up seed to him; and  
 “ *all were obliged* to obey this, under the  
 “ hazard of infamy if they refused; nei-  
 “ ther is there any exceptions made for  
 “ such as were married; from whence I  
 “ may faithfully conclude, that what  
 “ God made *necessary* in some cases, to  
 “ any degree, can in no case be *sinful*  
 “ *in itself*, since God is holy in all his  
 “ ways. And thus far it appears that  
 “ *polygamy* is not contrary to the law and  
 “ nature of marriage.”

I am indebted for the above quotation  
 to the\* before-mentioned reverend *Dean's*  
 book on *polygamy*, wherein the *Dean*  
 seems a little comforted by the *Bishop's*  
 having said, that “ he was at a distance  
 “ from his books and papers, when he  
 “ gave his opinion on this point.”—  
 “ This,” adds he, “ was the best excuse  
 “ that could be given for so rash a de-  
 “ cision, which it would have been for  
 “ the honour of his reading to have re-  
 “ tracted, and which, I sincerely wish  
 “ he had retracted, when he returned to  
 “ his books.”

The good *Dean*, in his zeal against *po-  
 lygamy*, don't give himself time to consi-  
 der the soundness of the learned *prelate's*  
 opinion.

\* See before, p. 117—119.

As there was *no law* against *polygamy*, there was nothing to exempt a *married man* from the obligation of marrying *his brother's widow* on this account; for if so, things might have been so situated, that *Bethlehem* might have gone away into some other family than that of *David*, into some other tribe than that of *Judah*, and, of course, *Joseph and his wife Mary* have gone elsewhere to *be taxed*; for this might evidently have been the consequence of the *widow and the inheritance* going into the hands of a *stranger*. But God says—*The wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger—her husband's brother shall go in unto her, &c.* Here is a *negative* clause, positively declaring whom she shall *not* marry, and an *affirmative* clause, as positively declaring whom she shall. Now let us suppose, that not only the *surviving brother*, but all the near *kinsmen*, to whom the marriage of the widow, and the redemption of the inheritance belonged, were *married men*; if that exempted them from the obligation of this law—as they could not *redeem the inheritance*, unless they *married the widow* (Ruth iv. 5.)—the end of this important law must in many cases be defeated—the widow be tempted to marry a stranger—to put herself and

the inheritance into his hands—and the whole reason assigned for the law itself, that of *raising up seed to the deceased*, to preserve the inheritance in his family, that *his name be not put out of Israel*—fall to the ground. For which *weighty* reasons, as there was evidently no law against *polygamy*, there could be no exemption of a man from the positive duty of this law *because he was married*. As we say—*ubi eadem ratio ibi idem jus*.

But the learned Dean, in order to overthrow all the Bishop's reasoning on the subject, observes from Selden's *Ux. Heb.* that "the *Chaldee* paraphrast, the "*Midrash*, and *Josephus*, agree, that this "was the reason why *Mablon's* next "kinsman refused to redeem *Ruth*, his "widow, viz.—Because it was not *lawful for him to marry her*, having a wife "*of his own*." That people should invent reasons for men's actions, where none are given, is not so surprizing as overlooking the reasons that are given, and substituting others which do not appear to be so much as thought of by the parties themselves. This is the case here—*Mablon's* next kinsman is applied to, as by law he ought to have been, to buy *Mablon's* inheritance, and to marry *Ruth* his widow: his answer is neither



more nor less than this—"I cannot re-  
 " deem it for myself, *lest I mar my own*  
 " *inheritance.*"—How these words relate  
 to the *lawfulness* or *unlawfulness* of the  
 matter, was reserved for the ingenuity of  
 modern interpreters to make out—that they  
 may, and most probably do, relate to the  
*expediency* or *inexpediency* of such a step,  
 the *kinsman's* present circumstances consid-  
 ered, may be easily inferred from the  
*words* of the *reason* given. The *kinsman*  
 might be married, perhaps have many  
 children, and but a small provision for  
 them—therefore, when he hears of not  
 only disburſing the redemption-price for  
*Mablon's* parcel of land, but that this  
 could not be done, without marrying a  
 very poor young woman, by whom he  
 might have another numerous family of  
 children, which he could not maintain,  
 educate, or provide for, out of the small  
 parcel of land which was \* *Elimelech's*,  
 but must diminish his own inheritance of  
 which he was possessed, to the damage of  
 his other family, he prudently declines  
 the *kinsman's* part—*lest*, said he, *I mar*  
*mine own inheritance.* Such a sense as

\* *Elimelech* was the father of *Mablon*; therefore  
 the land is called *Elimelech's*, it descending to *Mab-*  
*lon* from him.

this the words will most certainly bear; but as to their meaning that the man would not marry *Ruth*—"because it was "not lawful for him to marry her, *having a wife of his own*"—it is a conceit, fetched even farther than, one would think, the utmost unfairness of prejudice itself could reach.

Since I wrote the above, I have looked into *Bishop Patrick*, on *Ruth* iv. 6. who mentions the passage alluded to in the *Chaldee paraphrast*, and the *Midrash*; and so far from their appearing to say what the *Dean* would make them, there is not a word of any such thing; they put quite a different sense upon the words. As for *Josephus*, I would almost venture to affirm, without looking into the book, that he cannot so grossly contradict himself; for when he is writing that part of the *History of David*, where he speaks of his polygamy, he says—*δοῦτος δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ γυναῖκας ὡς δίκαιως καὶ νομίμως ἡγάγετο*—(God) "giving him wives, which he "justly and lawfully married." However, having consulted *Josephus* on the subject, I find no such reason assigned by the *kinsman*, for refusing to redeem *Mablon's* land, and to marry his widow, as the *Dean* asserts.—*Josephus*, *Antiq.* lib. ix. c. 5. § 4. speaking of the *kinsman's*

man's refusal, says, that he rejected the offer—'Εναι δὲ καὶ γυναῖκα λέγων αὐτῷ καὶ παῖδας ἡδὴ. "Saying, he had already a " wife and children;" but not a word that it was " unlawful to marry another " woman." Not that *Josephus* represents the matter as the *Bible* does, any more than the learned *Dean* rightly represents the sentiments of *Josephus*. It might not be expedient for the *kinsman* to marry *Ruth*, as he was circumstanced; but this has nothing to do with the *lawfulness* or *unlawfulness* of the matter, with respect to the law of God. *Lawfulness* and *expediency* are very distinct and different considerations. See 1 Cor. vi. 12. 1 Cor. x. 23. As for *Mr. Selden*, he, in the very passage which the *Dean* quotes, resolves the *kinsman's* refusal to marry *Ruth* into a matter of *prudence*, and that for much the same reasons which I have assigned above.

The law itself on which we have been discoursing, was only a *local* and *temporary* institution, and, in the very nature of it, could only concern the *Jews*, and that only with regard to their peculiar situation before the coming of the *Messiah*, when so much depended on the clearness of *family descent* and *inheritance*. It is observable that this law, though not reduced



reduced to writing and published till the time of *Moses*, yet existed among the *patriarchs*, as we learn from Gen. xxxviii. 18.

I now shall observe on some laws of more extensive import, the obligation of which must concern every man, and that at all times and places, because the evident purpose for which they were ordained, and the reasons on which they are apparently founded, must equally concern all mankind. The laws I mean, are those already spoken of, as made for the preservation of the female sex from ruin and prostitution, by compelling every man to marry the virgin he lies with. The first of them is to be found *Exod.* xxii. 16; the other *Deut.* xxii. 28, 29. These laws must in some cases \* command polygamy, and therefore, in such cases, make it a duty; for they are so framed as to admit of no other construction, consistently with the terms in which *Moses* hath recorded them. The terms in

\* Luther, de Digam. Episcoporum, § 65, says—  
 “Nota sunt jura Mosaica de fratris defuncti uxore,  
 “Et filia corrupta invito patre, quæ cogunt plurimum  
 “uxorum esse virum.”—“The Mosaic laws concerning the wife of a deceased brother, and concerning a daughter defiled against the father’s consent, are well known, which compel a man to have a plurality of wives.”

\* which

which these laws are enacted, with respect to the *men seducing or taking virgins, &c.* are as *indefinite* as words can possibly be: *If a man*, says our translation.—This must, *ex vi termini*, mean *any man* whatsoever, be his situation what it may—which is exactly the sense of the *Hebrew* *איש כי*—As the right understanding of this comprehensive and unlimited word *איש* is of the utmost importance to the point in question, I will lay a full and clear explanation of it before the reader.

*איש* “ This word has no relation to *kind* “ or *species*, though, according to “ its different genders, it has to “ *sex*; but is applied to almost any “ distinct *being* or *thing*; as, for “ instance, to *man, &c.*” See *Park-*  
*hurst's Heb. Lex.* sub voc *איש*—  
“ which,” saith he, “ denotes *ex-*  
“ *istence, subsistence, reality.*”

I will next subjoin the interpretation of *Calafia*, who, in his valuable *Hebrew Concordance*, gives us some *hundreds* of texts in which this word occurs.

*איש* “ *Persona, creatura*—nomen generale  
“ *quod essentiam rei non distinguit*”  
—A *person, a creature*—a general  
name which doth not distinguish the  
essence of the thing spoken of.

*איש*

וְאִם " Homo generaliter complectens  
" masculum & foeminam." MAN  
*generally, including male and female.*

וְאִם " Quis—quilibet—aliquis—unus—  
" quisque—quisque—alter."—*Who*  
*—whosoever—any one—\*every one—*  
*\* every man—any other—*  
*" unus ullus"*  
*some one any one.*

וְאִם " Sexus masculus in qualibet ani-  
" mantium specie" cum " mentio  
" foeminæ additur." Ut Gen. vii. 2.  
(xxiv. 16.) *THE MALE SEX in any*  
*species of animals where the female is*  
*also mentioned.*

וְאִם " Vir—maritus—si cum uxore con-  
" feratur." Gen. iii. 7. *An HUS-*  
*BAND, a MARRIED MAN, where*  
*joined with WIFE.*

The reader has now before him the meaning of the word וְאִם wheresoever it may be used, as applicable *to*, or significant *of*, mankind; and by this may see the use of it throughout the Bible where *man* is mentioned. He may also see that the phrase וְאִם כִּי—*If a man*, &c. so far from carrying any exception with it, as to a man's situation of being *married* or *unmarried*, excludes all exception whatso-

\* Thus it is rendered, Job xlii. 11.



ever wherever we meet with it; therefore as much in the texts of *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy* as elsewhere. Let the reader take the *Hebrew*, or even the *English* concordance, and try the experiment: he will find that כִּי אִישׁ in *Hebrew*, and *If any man* in *English*, are in the scriptures, as in every other book I ever met with, as *indefinite* as words can be.

But if no exception as to the *situation of the man* is expressed, is it not implied?—So far from that, the *Holy Ghost* (in this passage particularly) has demonstrably guarded against any such implication, and this by adding the words *not betrothed* to the description of the *virgin* or *damsel*, which is done in both places. *Expressio unius est exclusio alterius*—the expressing an exception with regard to the *woman*, but none with respect to the *man*, proves, as far as the soundest rules of construction of all laws can prove, that none was intended.

Had any restriction of this law with regard to the *situation* of the *man* been intended, it might easily have been expressed, by only adding some *restrictive* expression or \* epithet to the description of

\* The restrictive description of the *damsel* is לא אִרְשָׁה—*non desponsata*—not betrothed. But הָאִישׁ

of the *man* as to that of the *damsel*. But, instead of any thing of this sort, we find the indefinite *וְאִישׁ*; and therefore our translators have rightly rendered it *a man* indefinitely;—so the LXX *εἰς ἀνδρα*—but *if any man*;—the Latin—*si vir*—*if a man*;—the French of D. Martin—*si quelqu'un*—*if any one*. Though all the translators of the Bible which I have met with, have modestly, humbly, and faithfully represented the mind of God as He has been pleased to reveal it, yet some expositors have ventured to interpret *וְאִישׁ*—*if a man*—by—*If an unmarried man*—thus corrupting the passage by an interpolation, not only unwarranted by the *Hebrew text*, but by every translation of it extant. This method of interpreting scripture, not by scripture, but by our own preju-

*וְאִישׁ* is added to the description of the *man*. And it is very remarkable, that though *betrothing* is used so often in the Bible, it always relates to the *woman*, never to the *man*, as the *person betrothed*. The *man* is said to *betroth* a *woman*, as Deut. xxviii. 30. Deut. xx. 7. & al.—so when *betrothing* is figuratively used, as Hos. ii. 19, 20. But in neither sense is it once used in all the scriptures *passively on the man's side*.

This distinction is also maintained in the New Testament. See Matt. i. 18. Luke i. 27; ii. 5. 2 Cor. xi. 2. This can make no difference with regard to *DIVORCE*; but it seems to make a *considerable* one in certain other respects.

discd

diced imaginations, is making the word of God to mean *any* thing and *every* thing which fancy may invent; and rendering it, instead of a *sure word of prophecy, to the which we do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place*, 2 Pet. i. 19. a sort of *ignis fatuus*, by no means to be depended on for a director and guide, in so awful a concern as therein is proposed to every man to whom that word shall come.

The only shadow of excuse for such an interpretation, or rather *corruption* of the passages above mentioned, is the being able to produce some *positive law* against a man's *having more wives than one at a time*; and then, in order to make God's laws agree together, it may be thought reasonable to restrain the indefinite expression *כִּי אִישׁ*—*if a man*, in *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*, to *unmarried men only*. But as the *first* is impossible, the *second* is without, and indeed against, all authority from the law of God; for that it allowed *polygamy*, is just as clear as that it allowed *marriage*. Therefore the consequence is, that the expression in question being *general*, without *limitation* or *exception* with respect to the situation of the man, it must in some cases command *polygamy*, and therefore make it a *duty*.



This consequence must be *allowed*, if we let scripture speak for itself; it could not be avoided by any other means than a man's refraining entirely from the *other sex*, or, if he married, contenting himself with *one wife*. If a man went farther than this, he must take the consequence.—But as God would not suffer *a whore of the daughters of Israel*, so he made these laws to prevent their being exposed to prostitution by men's *taking* them, and then *putting them away*. This was just as likely to be the case where *married* men were concerned, as where *others* were; therefore positively forbidden as to *both* alike.

That there were some ingredients in these laws, of the ceremonial, local, or temporary kind, as the payment of *the fifty shekels to the father*, we do not deny; but that the *morality* of these laws must survive as long as *morality* itself exists, is as clear, as that exposing a woman to *prostitution* and *ruin* must at all times be equally hateful in the sight of God, and therefore at all times equally provided against by these humane and salutary laws.

In confirmation of what is here said, I would lay it down as a rule in all cases, that wherever a *moral* intendment appears

to

to be involved in the words of a *ritual*, *ceremonial*, or *local* and *temporary* institution, there, though the *letter* of the law itself can have no place amongst us, yet the *spirit* and *moral intention* must survive as long as the world endures. For instance, it is written, *Deut. xxv. 4. Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.* By this we must suppose, that it was the custom in *those days*, and in *that part* of the world, to lay the *sheaves* on the floor, and to get the corn out by the *treading* or *trampling* of *oxen*. We get the corn out of the *sheaves* by *threshing* with *flails*; therefore the *letter* of the law above mentioned has nothing to do with us. But the *spirit* of this law being of a *moral* nature, and to teach us, that *those who labour in the word and doctrine* are to *live of their labours*, for that *the labourer is worthy of his reward*—this law is itself quoted by *St. Paul*, 1 Cor. ix. 9. 1 Tim. v. 18. as a proof that *they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.* 1 Cor. ix. 14. From whence, as from other instances which might be mentioned, I infer, that though a *law itself*, or *some part* of it, may have vanished as to the *letter*, yet it *may*, or rather *must*, survive as to the *spirit* of it.

Shall we say that we must construe the

words—if *any man*—to mean *unmarried* men only, because, though God's laws do not forbid *polygamy*, yet *ours* do? To imagine that our laws are to controul the laws of God, is a blasphemous arrogance, in comparison of which Cardinal *Wolfey's* —EGO ET REX MEUS—is *humility* itself in the very abstract. The law of the land is such, that a *married Englishman* cannot publicly and openly marry *the virgin he has seduced or taken*; he cannot obey the *letter* therefore of these laws of God, as the *Jews* could have done; but he can and ought to make them the law of his conscience; and if he has *taken a virgin*, &c. he can, according to the *spirit* of these laws, *maintain, protect, and provide* for her, and, if he survives his present engagement, marry her publicly in preference to all other women upon earth.—Thus would one great end of this law be answered, and millions be preserved from destruction. If indeed the woman is profligate enough to forsake the man, and voluntarily unite herself with another, she is guilty of transgressing these laws of God, as in other cases of *adultery*: for, the same reason which is given why the man *shall not put her away all his days*, viz. *because he hath humbled her*, goes to what is also said of the woman—*she shall be his wife*—she certainly



certainly therefore *is his wife* in God's sight, and *whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.* Prov. vi. 29.

I some time ago met with two sermons, which were preached, and afterwards printed, on occasion of passing the *marriage-act*. The learned author, speaking of *polygamy*, expresses himself as follows :  
 “ We find likewise in those early times,  
 “ and afterwards, that *polygamy* was partly  
 “ indulged, but only upon certain *typical*  
 “ occasions, and then only among the  
 “ *patriarchs* and some of the *kings*, who  
 “ were all express types of CHRIST in  
 “ their several marriages ; and in this  
 “ respect they each typified and prefigured CHRIST's marrying the *Jewish*  
 “ church, and the several churches of  
 “ the *Heathen* nations, which, under the  
 “ gospel, were all designed to make but  
 “ *one church* or *one spouse* ; therefore,  
 “ under the *gospel*, *polygamy* ceases, and  
 “ but *one wife* is allowed.”

If this author will examine his *Bible* a little more closely, he will find himself mistaken both in his *premises*, and in his *conclusion*. In the first place, it cannot be true that “ *polygamy* was partly indulged, only upon some typical occasions, and then only among the *patriarchs* and some of the *kings*.”—This appears from the law, Deut. xxi. 15. which was

enacted after the *patriarchal* age had ceased, and many ages before there was a *king in Israel*. That law is framed in *general* terms, so as to include *any* and *every* man—that has *two wives*:—it does not say, if a *patriarch* or *king* hath *two wives*—but—כִּי תִהְיֶה לְאִישׁ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים—literally—“if there be to a man”—or—as we translate it—“if a man have—two wives.” It is apparent, then, that the law being *general*, it was meant to regulate a *general* practice. It is also *untrue* in point of *fact*, that “polygamy” was partly indulged only to *patriarchs* “and some of the *kings* ;” witness *Elkanah*, who was neither *patriarch* nor \* *king*, and yet we find, by his history, 1 Sam. i. 1. &c. that *polygamy* was *indulged* to him as evidently as to any *patriarch* or *king* that ever lived. From all which it appears, that our *author's* conclusion—“therefore, under the *gospel*, “polygamy ceases, and but *one wife* is allowed”—falls to the ground. But let us look back again to Deut. xxi. 15.—

\* So it is said of *Gideon*—He had seventy sons of his body begotten, for he had many wives. Judg. viii. 30. Of *Jair*, he had thirty sons. Judg. ix. 4. *Ibzan* of *Bethlehem* had thirty sons and thirty daughters. Judg. xii. 9. *Abdon* had forty sons, ver. 14. These were all *judges* of *Israel*, and must, by the numbers of their children, be concluded to have been *polygamists* as well as *Gideon*.

That

That law was evidently made to regulate the disposal of a man's *inheritance* who had *two wives*, and to prevent the *disfession* of the *first-born* through favour and affection towards the child who was not so, because born of the *favourite wife*. This could not concern the *patriarchs*, who had all been long dead—nor (immediately at least) the *kings*, who did not exist till near *four hundred* years afterwards—nor the *priests* and *Levites*, who could have *no inheritance* to dispose of. *Numb.* xviii. 20, 21.—If then it did not concern the *people at large*, it was *nugatory*, for it concerned *nobody* at all.—This is surely a very sufficient proof that *polygamy* was an allowed practice of the *Jews* \* in general. The *all-wise* God cannot be

\* The modern *Jews* forbid *polygamy* among the people, and this from the authority of some passage in the *Talmud*; but the reasons assigned to me, on discoursing with a learned *Jew* on this subject, were of the prudential kind; such as the people in general being too poor to maintain more than one wife, the quarrels it occasioned, and the like.—I asked him if he looked upon it as forbidden by the law of God?—"No, God forbid," replied he earnestly; "what then must be the case of *Abraham*, *Jacob*, *David*, &c.?" He likewise told me, that this prohibition was "not *universal*, for that in some countries *polygamy* was still practised among the *Jews*." He added, "that even *here*, if a *Jew* married a woman, and had no children by her,



be supposed to enact so positive a law, if there were no persons who could be objects of it; and this law to regulate *certain circumstances* which did not exist; nor is it easy to imagine, that if those *circumstances* were *sinful*, they would not have been as explicitly *condemned*, as they are here plainly allowed and regulated. What has been observed above, concerning the law of *Deut. xxi. 15.* holds equally true of *Exod. xxi. 10.* which had as little to do with *patriarchs* and *kings* as the other had.

I cannot conclude this part of my subject without mentioning a case, which those would do well to consider, who confound *polygamy* with *adultery*, and plead the authority of the *great* and *infallible interpreter* of God's *mind* and *will* for so doing; I mean the case of *Abime-*

"after ten years he might marry another wife." So, where a man defiles a *virgin*, "*she shall be his wife*, agreeable to *Exod. xxii. 16.* and "*Deut. xxii. 28, 29.*" I take the truth to be, that the *Jews*, as to the business of *polygamy*, usually conform to the custom of the country where they live. "As for the modern *Jews*," says *Leo Mutinensis*, "those of them who live in the *East*, still keep up their antient practice of *polygamy*; whereas in *Germany* they are not allowed this privilege, and in *Italy* very rarely, and only in case a man hath lived ten years with his wife without issue." See *Puffend. book vi. ch. 1. § 16.*

*lech,*

*lech*, King of Gerar; who, having already a wife of his own, sent and took *Sarah*, the wife of *Abraham*, Gen. xx. 2. But God came to *Abimelech* in a dream by night, and said to him—Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken—for she is a man's wife. Here God plainly set forth his thoughts of adultery, or taking a man's wife; that it is a sin to be punished with death.—However, *Abimelech* had not actually defiled her, and shews that, if he had not been deceived by *Abraham's* saying that *Sarah* was his sister, he would not have taken her at all.—Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother. In the integrity of my heart, and innocency of my hands, have I done this. And God said unto him in a dream, yea, I know that thou didst it in the integrity of thine heart, for I also withheld thee from sinning against me, therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. The sin of adultery is certainly marked very strongly, but here was a fair opportunity to have as strongly marked polygamy, if that was a sin also. How could *Abimelech*, having a wife, ver. 17, take any other woman innocently? and yet God allows this to have been done, in his answer to the plea of *Abimelech*. Though he was innocent as to

an intentional *adultery*, being ignorant that *Sarah* was *Abraham's* wife, yet *Abimelech* must know that he had a *wife of his own*, and therefore could not *innocently*, and in the *integrity of his heart*, take any other woman of any kind, if *polygamy* was a *sin*. But supposing this poor \* *heathen* was ignorant, and therefore said this knowing no better, yet God could not be ignorant of His own mind and will, when he said—*Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thine heart, for I also withheld thee from sinning against Me*. Rather, why did he not say—  
 “Thou wicked wretch, how canst thou  
 “dare to talk of the *innocency of thine*  
 “*bands*, and of the *integrity of thine*  
 “*heart*?—supposing thou didst not know  
 “*Sarah* to be *another man's wife*, yet the  
 “taking any woman, as thou hast already  
 “a *wife of thine own*, is against the law  
 “of marriage, and therefore a *mortal sin*.”  
 Instead of this, God allows his plea, and the moment *Abimelech* restored *Sarah* to her husband, God graciously removes every mark of his displeasure, ver. 17, 18.

\* “It appears by this whole history of *Abimelech*,  
 “that he was a man of great virtue in those days;  
 “not an idolater, but a worshipper of the true God,  
 “as *Melchizedek*, the high priest of that country,  
 “was.” Patrick on Gen. xx. 7.

So



So ABRAHAM \* *prayed unto God, and God healed ABIMELECH, and his wife, and his maid-servants—וַאֲמֵהָרִין* (which seem to have stood in the same relation to Abimelech, as the אֲמָה Hagar, did to Abram, chap, xvi. 3, 4.) *and they bare children—וַיִּלְדוּ—pepererunt, Mont.—they brought forth: for the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of ABIMELECH, because of SARAH, ABRAHAM'S wife. It should seem by the context, that God had withheld Abimelech from sinning against Him, in a criminal access to*

\* Who was himself at that hour a *polygamist*. See Gen. xvi. 3, 4. It is likewise to be observed, that Abraham was a *Christian* believer, as much so as Paul was, who tells us, *the gospel was preached to Abraham—that he believed it—was justified by faith—and that they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham, who is (spiritually) the father of all believers in CHRIST.* Comp. Rom. iv. 16, &c. with Gal. iii. 9, 14, and John viii. 56. Abraham would have been exceedingly puzzled, to have found out what the *gospel which was preached to him* (and in which he believed and rejoiced) had to do with polygamy, or to have accounted for the possibility of the children of his faith, in future ages, finding out that it was the same thing with *adultery*; when Abraham's own eyes and ears were witnesses of there being put as great a difference between *polygamy* and *adultery*, as could possibly exist between any two things in creation, and this, by the determination of that God, who afterwards gave the law to Moses at Mount Sinai.

*Sarah,*

*Sarah*, by inflicting a *judicial disability* of some kind upon him; also, to mark the more strongly His holy indignation against him, for taking *another man's wife*, He rendered *Abimelech's* wife, then *great with child*, (as also such of his *maid-servants*, who it should seem, from what is said, ver. 17, 18, were probably his *concubines*, and some of them also *great with child*) *unable to bring forth*—but when *Sarah* was restored, *Abimelech* was restored to his own women, and they to him.—All this by the *immediate* hand of God.

I would only say, that any person who can attentively consider the several circumstances of this history of the divine interposition, and talk of the sinfulness of *polygamy* in the sight of God, even putting it on the same footing with *adultery*, will appear to differ very widely, in his judgment of the matter, from this authentic record of the *mind* and *will* of the MOST HIGH.

It is to be remarked also, that throughout the whole scripture, the same approbation, many like circumstances which evidenced that approbation; also, like *answers to prayer*, and like *miracles*, in token of that approbation, attended equally on a *second*, or *after-taken wife*, under a *polygamous* contract, as on a *first* or *only* wife. This  
may

may be said to be uniformly the case, as may appear from the following

P A R A D I G M.

*Sarai* was barren—she had no child—Gen. xi. 30.

And *Abram* said, LORD GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?—Behold to me thou hast given no seed.—And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and He said unto him—So shall thy seed be. Gen. xv. 2, 3, 5.

And GOD said unto *Abraham*, As for *Sarah* thy wife, I will bless her, and give thee a son of her. Yea I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. Gen. xvii. 15, 16.

GOD said—*Sarah* thy wife shall indeed bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name *Isaac*. Gen. xvii. 19.

And *Sarah* conceived and bare *Abraham* a son in his old age—and *Abraham*

And *Sarai* said unto *Abram*, Go in unto my maid; and she gave *Hagar* to her husband *Abram* to be his wife. And he went in unto *Hagar*, and she conceived—and the angel of the LORD said, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. Gen. xvi. 2, 4, 10. Yea,

GOD said, As for *Ishmael*, behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. Gen. xvii. 20.

And the angel of the LORD said unto *Hagar*, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name *Ishmael*.

And *Hagar* bare *Abram* a son, and *Abram* called his son's name, which *Hagar*



Sam called his name *Isaac*.  
Gen. xxi. 2, 3.

*Isaac* was forty years old when he took *Rebekah* to wife—and *Isaac* intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD was intreated of him, and *Rebekah* his wife conceived, Gen. xxv. 20, 21.

*Manasse's* wife was barren and bare not; and the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold, now thou art barren and barest not, but thou shalt conceive and bear a son—and the woman bare a son, and called his name *Samson*; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. Judg. xiii. 2, 3, 24.

From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. V. M. Luke i. 48.

*Hagar* bare, *Ishmael*. Gen. xvi. 15, 15.

*Jacob* took *Leah* and *Rachel*—but *Rachel* was barren. Gen. xxix. 31. And she gave him *Bilbah* her handmaid to wife; and *Jacob* went in unto her; and *Bilbah* conceived and bare *Jacob* a son. And *Rachel* said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son. Gen. xxx. 4, 5, 6.

And *Bilbah*, *Rachel's* maid, conceived again, and bare *Jacob* a second son, and *Rachel* said, נפתלי אלהים נפתלי  
“ By the agency (Heb. “ twistings) of the *Aleim* “ I am intwisted with “ my sister—i. e. my family is now interwoven with my sister’s, “ and has a chance of “ producing the promised seed.” See Park. Heb. Lex. פתל

When *Leah* saw that she had left off bearing—she took *Zilpah* her maid, and gave her to *Jacob* to wife. And *Zilpah*, *Leah's* maid, bare *Jacob* a son.

And *Zilpah*, *Leah's* maid, bare *Jacob* a second son.

And *Leah* said—Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed.

And

And God hearkened unto *Leah*, and she conceived and bare *Jacob* a fifth son. And *Leah* said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to mine husband. And God remembered *Rachel*, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb, and she conceived and bare a son, and said, God hath taken away my reproach. And she called his name *Joseph*, and said, The LORD shall add to me another son. Gen. xxx. 24. See also Gen. xxxv. 9—12.

There was a certain priest named *Zacharias*, and his wife's name was *Elizabeth*—and they had no child, because *Elizabeth* was barren, and they both were well stricken in years. And the angel said unto him, Fear not, *Zacharias*, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name *John*—and he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, &c. And his wife *Elizabeth* conceived, and said—Thus hath the LORD dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me to take away my reproach among men. And she brought

There was a certain man of *Ramathaim Zophim* (a Levite of the family of the *Kohathites*, see 1 Chron. vi. 33, 34, &c.) and his name was *Elkanah*. And he had two wives—the name of one was *Hannah*—and of the other *Peninnah*.—*Peninnah* had children; *Hannah* had no children—the LORD had shut up her womb.—And her adversary also provoked her sore for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore—and she vowed

brought forth a son, and  
his name was called *John*,  
&c. *Luke i. 5, 7, 13, 25,*  
&c.

vowed a vow, and said,  
O LORD of Hosts, if thou  
wilt indeed look upon the  
affliction of thine hand-  
maid, and remember and  
not forget thine hand-  
maid, but wilt give unto  
thine handmaid a man-  
child, I will give him  
unto the LORD all the  
days of his life — &c.  
Then *Eli* (the *high-priest*)  
answered, and said — Go  
in peace, and the GOD of  
*Israel* grant thee thy pe-  
tition that thou hast ask-  
ed of Him, &c. Where-  
fore it came to pass, when  
the time was come about,  
after *Hannah* had con-  
ceived, that she bare a  
son, and called his name  
*Samuel*, saying, Because  
I have asked him of the  
LORD, &c. And *Hannah*  
said — For this child I  
prayed, and the LORD  
hath given me my peti-  
tion that I asked of Him.  
*1 Sam. i. 1, &c.*

*Song of the Virgin Mary.*

My soul doth magnify  
the LORD, and my spirit  
hath rejoiced in GOD my  
Saviour.  
For he hath regarded  
the low estate of his hand-  
maiden.

He

*Hannah's Song.*

Mine heart rejoiceth  
in the LORD, mine horn  
is exalted in the LORD,  
my mouth is enlarged  
over mine enemies, be-  
cause I rejoice in thy  
salvation.

There



He that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his name.

And His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation.

He hath shewed strength with His arm, He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and hath exalted them of low degree.

He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away.

He hath holpen His servant *Israel*, in remembrance of his mercy, &c.

There is none holy as the LORD.

He will keep the feet of His saints.

The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girt with strength—the wicked shall be silent in darkness.

The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces—the LORD maketh poor and maketh rich, He bringeth low and lifteth up.

They that are full have hired themselves out for bread, and they that were hungry ceased.

He shall give strength unto His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed.

The conclusion of all which appears to be, that either we do not worship the same God which the *Jews* did, or the God we worship doth not disallow nor disapprove *polygamy*. Miraculous blessings bestowed of God, in answer to the prayers of people living in open breach of His law, are totally contradictory to the whole scripture-character of God. *The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of*

*the upright is His delight.* Prov. xv. 9. *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.* Prov. xxviii. 9. Comp. Ps. lxvi. 18, 19, 20.

In what has been said on the subject of this chapter on polygamy, I should think arguments enough have been brought to prove that it was *not sinful* in the sight of God, under the Old Testament, and that the blessed God, by becoming man (1 Cor. xv. 47.) and condescending to appear on earth for us men, and for our salvation, in the likeness of sinful flesh, Rom. viii. 3; made of a woman made under the law, Gal. iv. 4; came not to destroy the law, by lessening the security which it was evidently made to afford the weaker sex against the stronger. That the treachery which was so positively forbidden, and so amply provided against, among the Jews, should be allowed to Christians (who are children of the same Heavenly Father, subjects of the same Almighty King) and even commanded them in some cases, is a monstrous supposition!—repugnant to the positive institution of God, *They shall be one flesh*—contradictory to all sound reason—and abhorrent from every generous, honourable, and humane principle. Whatever the situation of the  
man

man may be, the danger arising to the woman from the consequences of seduction and dereliction is equal, therefore equally provided against by the law of God.

How polygamy became reprobated in the Christian church is easily accounted for, when we consider how early the reprobation of marriage itself began to appear. The Gnostics, whom Epiphanius derives from Simon Magus, condemned marriage in the most shocking terms, saying that it was "*of the Devil*;" but this was to support themselves in their horrible tenet, that "*all women should be common amongst them*." Better people soon afterwards condemned marriage as unlawful to Christians, and this under a wild notion of greater purity and perfection, in keeping from all intercourse with the other sex. This opinion divided itself into many sects, and gave great trouble to the church before it was discountenanced. Still second marriages were held infamous, and called no better than lawful whoredom. Nay, they were not ashamed to write, that, "*a man's first wife being dead, it was adultery, and not marriage, to take another*." Amidst all this, polygamy must necessarily receive the severest anathema—for if it could be supposed



*unlawful for Christians to marry at all, and then so detestable to marry a second time, after the death of a wife, the having two at once must be, a fortiori, accounted more horrible than all the rest. All these several opinions had texts of scripture pressed into their service, by the ingenious zeal of their several abettors: the Old Testament was of no authority in the matter; the New Testament was made to speak what it did not mean, concerning what it does mention; and construed so as to condemn what, when rightly understood, it does not mention. The two first of these conceits about marriage have been long exploded, except with respect to the Romish clergy, who, to this hour, are forbidden to marry. But polygamy throughout the Christian church, the western part of it at least, is looked upon as a sin against the seventh commandment, though there is not a syllable in the whole Bible which makes it so. When I mention polygamy, I would always be understood to mean on the man's side, for on the side of the woman, the whole scripture shews it to be a capital offence.*

Why this distinction should be made, HE best knows who made it; but, in part, we may suppose, from the consequences

quences attending on *one side*, which cannot be on *the other*; these are finely touched by the strong and masterly pen of the *son of Sirach*—*Ecclus* xxiii. 22, 23. Having spoken of the *adulterer*, he saith, (agreeably to *Lev.* xx. 10.) *This man shall be punished in the streets of the city*, (see also *Deut.* xxii. 24.) *and where he suspecteth not he shall be taken*. He then proceeds—*Thus shall it go also with the wife that leaveth her husband, and bringeth in an heir by another*—For, first, *she hath disobeyed the law of the Most High*—secondly—*she hath trespassed against her own husband*—and thirdly—*she hath played the whore in adultery, and brought children by another man*. *She shall be brought out into the congregation, and inquisition shall be made of her children*.—*Her children shall not take root, and her branches shall bring no fruit*. *She shall leave her memory to be cursed, and her reproach shall not be blotted out*. Though these be the words of an *apocryphal* writer, they deserve the highest regard, because they are exactly consonant with the law of God. But it is very extraordinary, that in a discourse against fornicators, *whoremongers*, and *adulterers* (which commences, ver. 16. and is continued to ver. 26. inclusive) not a word should be said against *polygamists*, if

*polygamy* were a sin as much on the *man's* side as on the *woman's*.—He most likely would not have passed it over in silence, had there been *any law* against it.

His description of the *adulteress* is very fine, and the aggravations of her offence, by bringing forth a spurious issue, strongly marked; but they are such as cannot exist on the man's side, and therefore hence, in part at least, arises the difference.

What he says of the *adulterer* is also remarkably striking, and evidently taken from *Job* xxiv. 15. We lose much of its propriety, from our mis-translation of Ὁ ἄνθρωπος παραβαίνων ἀπο τῆς κλινῆς αὐτοῦ — *A man that breaketh wedlock*, we call it; but this is not a translation of the words—they literally are—the *man who transgresseth from out of his bed*—like the *murderer*, *Job* xxiv. 14. *who, rising with the light, is in the night as a thief*—So the *adulterer*. Saith *Job*—the eye of the *adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me, and disguiseth his face*. The son of *Sirach* represents the *adulterer* as “*leaving his bed, stealing out of*” it, as it were, to execute his plans of “*wickedness, at a time when he thinks*” the unseasonableness of the hour, and “*the darkness of the night, will con-*”  
“*ceal*



“ceal him from the eyes of all.” This man is, in *Job*, called זָנוּי an *adulterer*, or *defiler of other men's wives*.—That the same character is meant by the son of *Sirach*, is evident, from comparing *Ecclus* xxiii. 18. with *Job* xxiv. 15; and the punishment said to await him, *Ecclus* xxiii. 21. with that assigned to *adulterers*, *Lev.* xx. 10. *Deut.* xxii. 22, 24.

Another reason of the difference, that is to say, why *polygamy* should be allowed to the *man*, and no such liberty belong to the *woman*, arises also from the *inferiority* evidently stamped upon the *woman* by the *God of nature*, by whom she is placed under the absolute *power* of her *husband*, so that she cannot dispose of her *person*, on any occasion, or to any purpose whatsoever, to any other but to himself, as may appear from *Gen.* iii. 16. She is not at liberty to make any *contract* whatsoever, without her *husband's* consent—even *religious vows* are utterly void; she cannot *perform* them if the *husband* disagreeeth thereto. *Numb.* xxx. 8. *The wife is*—ὑποτασσόμενη τῷ ἰδίῳ ἀνδρὶ—*subjected to her own proper husband*, 1 *Pet.* iii. 1. The apostle *Paul* uses the same expression, when he says, *Rom.* xiii. 1. *Let every soul be subjected* (ὑποτασσέσθω) *to the higher powers*. But none of these things are

said on the *side* of the man—even in teaching in the congregation, the apostle marks out the woman's inferiority—I Tim. ii. 11. *Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection—I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.* Again, the same apostle saith—*The head of the woman is the man—the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.* 1 Cor. xi. 3, 8, 9. It appears then from the nature of things, as constituted by the Creator himself, that the man hath powers which the woman hath not, and therefore may use a freedom of action which the \* woman cannot. The apostle's saying, *the man was not made for the woman, but the woman for the man*, reminds me of the manner in which CHRIST vindicated his disciples, when they were accused by the Pharisees of breaking the sabbath, because *they plucked some ears of corn on the sabbath—*

\* Besides all this, it may be said, that the more wives a man hath, the more children he is likely to have; but this cannot be on the woman's side; for she cannot breed the oftner by having more men than one.—Such a mixture is known to be even destructive of conception, so that the more men a woman may have, the less likely is she to breed at all. This surely affords a strong proof that polyandry (as it is called) is contrary to nature.

day

day—He said unto them, *The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath, wherefore the Son of Man is LORD also of the sabbath.* The reader may transfer this argument, by parity of reason, to the other subject which we have been speaking of; and it furnishes a proof, by no means inconclusive, why a *man* may be a *polygamist*, but a *woman* not.

But we may go farther, and observe, that, without *this difference*, the grand ends of GOD's *moral government*, with respect to the *commerce of the sexes*, would not have been provided for. The very *laws* themselves, which were made to secure *those ends* on *both sides*, must have become mere *cyphers*. If *polygamy* had been *permitted* on the *woman's side*, what must become of that law—Deut. xxii. 22. *If a man* (וְאִם אִישׁ—*if any man whatsoever*) *be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman.* So thou shalt put away evil from ISRAEL? If the having more wives than one at a time had been *forbidden* the *man*, what, in numberless instances, must have become of Deut. xxii. 28, 29. *If a man* (וְאִם אִישׁ as before—*if any man whatsoever*) *find a damsel that is a virgin which is not betrothed—and lie with her—she shall*  
be



be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days? The first of these laws (as that of Lev. xx. 10.) was apparently to secure the man against the *treachery* of the woman—the second (as Exod. xxii. 16.) to secure the woman against the *treachery* of the man—and both to secure the world from that confusion and mischief which must be brought upon it (and are daily brought upon it by our disregard of these laws) by the *treachery* of either.

As the woman had the business of *par-turition* allotted to her, she must necessarily be looked upon as the *repository* of those bonds and cements of human society, without which it cannot \* subsist; such

\* The *rabbinical* explanation of the word *וְיָצָא* in Exod. xx. 14. has something very striking in it. *R. Levi* saith, that “this word, absolutely and “simply, denotes *congress* with the wife of another “man. Nor is it used but where a *married woman* “is concerned. The reason of this precept is, “that the world should be peopled agreeably to the “will of God. The blessed God willed, that all “creatures of the world should bring forth fruit “according to their respective species, and that one “species should not be mixed nor confounded with “another. He willed that the same should obtain “with respect to the human offspring, that it might “appear whose child every man was, and that the “seed of one should not be confounded with that of “another.

such as family descents, pedigrees, genealogies, inheritances, and all communications and distinctions of relationship. Therefore the *Creator* did, in his infinite wisdom, set bounds to the commerce of the sexes, on the part of the woman, which could not be passed under pain of death.

*Whoredom* and *fornication* are, for the same reasons, also inimical to those bonds of human society above-mentioned, introductory of all manner of confusion and wickedness, inconsistent with the law of marriage, and the probable causes of ruin and destruction to the *female sex*.—Therefore, as *seduction* and *dereliction* must, in the very nature of things, lead to these, the positive law of God forbids *any man* to take a *virgin*, and then abandon her.

“ *another*. Moreover, many corruptions are found  
 “ in *adultery*, which occasion the breach of many  
 “ commandments. God commanded to honour pa-  
 “ rents; but in case of *adultery* they cannot be  
 “ known. So we are forbidden any intercourse of  
 “ marriage with *sisters*, and *other relatives*; but  
 “ *adultery* tends to destroy these laws; for, where  
 “ this is, men cannot know their own relations.”  
 Thus speak the *Rabbins*, agreeably to the scriptures,  
 and matter of fact, therefore are worth attending  
 to in this point. The reader must surely see, very  
 evidently, reasons for the *seventh* commandment on  
 the *woman's* side, which cannot apply on the *man's*,  
 and why *adultery*, or *defiling a man's wife*, was made  
 so penal to both parties concerned.

As

As to what has been said touching the harmony of the *Old and New Testaments*, and the perpetual obligation of the *moral law* as to its *immutability*, so that what it once *forbad* it always *forbids*, and what it did *not forbid* can never be *forbidden*—it is a point of such infinite consequence, as to deserve a recapitulation—and as I cannot sum up the matter in words more clear and forcible, than our *church* has done in her seventh *article*, I will conclude this *chapter* with that found and scriptural account of the matter:—

“ The *Old Testament* is not contrary  
 “ to the *New*; for both in the *Old*  
 “ and *New Testament* everlasting life  
 “ is offered to mankind by CHRIST,  
 “ who is the only mediator between  
 “ GOD and man. Wherefore they  
 “ are not to be heard, which feign  
 “ that the *old fathers* did only look  
 “ for *temporary* promises.  
 “ Although the law of GOD, given  
 “ from GOD by *Moses*, as touching  
 “ *ceremonies* and *rites*, do not bind  
 “ *Christian men*; nor the *civil* pre-  
 “ cepts thereof ought, of necessity,  
 “ to be received into any common-  
 “ wealth—yet, notwithstanding, no  
 “ *Christian* man whatsoever is free  
 “ from the obedience of the com-  
 “ mandments



“mandments which are called *moral*.”

No one can consider aright the *divine institution of marriage*, and not see that it is founded in the very *nature of things*, and that by the God of nature. This is as self-evident, as that if mankind were to *increase and multiply, and replenish the earth*, there must be an appointed means by which this was to brought to pass. Therefore the laws concerning *marriage* cannot be reckoned a mere object of those *rites and ceremonies* which were to *vanish away*. Heb. viii. 13.

Nor can they be reckoned among the objects of that *civil polity*, which was only calculated for the government of a *particular* people, in a *particular* part of the world, and that under *particular* circumstances, such as never were or can be known to any other people on the earth—unless *marriage* itself can be supposed to be confined to them, and not equally to concern the whole human race.

The *moral* law hath therefore *marriage* as its object, as concerning, in the highest and most material points, the *moral* actions of men. This clearly appears, not only from the very nature of the thing itself, but from the very words of the *seventh* commandment—*Thou shalt not com-*  
mit

mit adultery; and again of the tenth—*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.* These are *moral* laws, equally binding at all times—in all places—over all persons. And as the *seventh* commandment is a *moral* law founded on the divine institution of *marriage itself*, so are all the expositions of it which are to be found in the scripture, unless we can be absurd enough to imagine, that the *letter* of a law can be of a *moral* nature, and that the sense, meaning, and intendment of it are only of a *ceremonial* or *civil* tendency.

What is meant by the word *ἡρᾶ*—*adultery*, is not to be determined by the conceits, inventions, customs, or laws of men, but by the mind and will of God, as revealed to us in the *precepts* and *examples* which are recorded in *His word* for our instruction; and especially from the uniform and unvaried idea annexed to the use of that word throughout the writings of *Moses* and the *prophets*. If these have failed in giving us the true sense of it, then is it not true that their writings are *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction* (*ἐνανορθωσις*—the amendment of what is wrong) for *instruction in righteousness*, so that the man of God (i. e. the believer) *might be perfect, thoroughly furnished* (both as to knowledge and

and practice—nothing less can be the *scope* of *ἀπὸς*) unto all good works. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. The scriptures which are spoken of in this passage are the scriptures of the Old Testament, or *those holy scriptures* which TIMOTHY had known from a child—before a single line of the New Testament was written, ver. 15. If therefore *polygamy* does not stand recorded as a *sin* against the law of GOD, either by *Moses* or the *prophets*, but as a matter *owned, blessed, allowed* of GOD, we must say, unless we pretend to be wise above what is written, that it is *no sin*, for *sin is the transgression of the law*. As to the common notion, that it was made sinful by some *new law* of CHRIST, and absolutely forbidden in the New Testament, it is one of the *three pious \* lies* which owed their

\* “ It was a maxim avowed in the 4th century;  
 “ that—it is an act of virtue to deceive and lie;  
 “ when, by that means, the interests of the church  
 “ might be promoted.—This horrible maxim was in-  
 “ deed of long standing, and had been adopted for  
 “ some ages past, to the unspeakable detriment of  
 “ that glorious cause in which they were employed.  
 “ And it must be frankly confessed, that the great-  
 “ est men, and most eminent saints, were more or  
 “ less tainted with this corrupt principle. We  
 “ would willingly except *Ambrose* and *Hilary*,  
 “ *Austin*, *Gregory Nazianzen*, and *Jerome*; but  
 “ TRUTH, which is more respectable than these ve-  
 “ nerable



their invention to the ignorant zeal of some professors and writers in the very early ages of *Christianity*. One was—that “marriage was a carnal thing, inconsistent with the purity and perfection of a *Christian*, and therefore \* unlawful under the gospel.”—Another was—that “if a man, on the death of his wife, married again, it was no better than *adultery*.”—The *third*, begotten between the other two, was—that “polygamy, though allowed to the *Jews* under the Old Testament, is forbidden

“nerable fathers, obliges us to involve them in the general accusation.” See *Mosheim*, vol. i. p. 200.

“Though the primitive *Christians* (says *Moyle*) lived up to the full rules of their religion with the utmost probity and innocence of manners, yet it is too certain, there were some persons among them, who, through a mistaken zeal, made no scruple of lying for the sake of their religion. Their fictions found an easy reception in a credulous age, and were conveyed down to posterity as certain truths.” See *Jortin. Rem.* vol. i. p. 299.

\* *Epiphanius*, *Hæres.* 58, speaks of the *Valesians*, who castrated themselves, and also their guests, that by this means they might introduce them into the kingdom of heaven — “Se & hospites suos castrant, ut ita secum introducerent in Regnum cælorum.” They held that none but *eunuchs* could be saved.

*Nisi quis eunuchus fieret, salvari non posse.*

“ to *Christians* under the *New*.” The two first (among the *Protestants* at least) are come to nought—the last is as generally believed among *Christians* of all sorts, as the lye of *transubstantiation* is in the *Romish church*. And there can be little doubt, but that a man who has *two wives*, under whatever circumstances they might be taken, would be looked upon to be as *impious*, and as much a *child of the devil*, amongst us, as a person would be among the *Papists*, who *wickedly* refused to give up his outward senses, and to believe that a small piece of *wafer*, after certain words said over it by a *priest*, is the body, flesh, blood, and bones, of a man six feet high—or as a *priest*, *bishop*, or *pope*, who married at all.

As these things will be farther considered under the head of *Superstition*, I will now hasten to the examination of a notion, which I fear is *too common* among us, and on which what is usually said and thought on the subject of *polygamy*, is for the most part built; I mean that of representing CHRIST as appearing in the world as “ a *new lawgiver*, who was “ to introduce a *more pure and perfect system of morality*, than that of the law “ *which was given by Moses*.”—This horrible blasphemy against the *holiness* and *perfection* of God’s law, as well as

against the truth of CHRIST, who declared that *He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it*—this utter contradiction both of the *law* and the *gospel*—was the foundation on which the heretic *Socinus* built all his other abominable errors. From whence he had it, will appear in the sequel. In the mean time, I cannot help stopping a while to lament the progress which *Socinianism* is daily making amongst us—with many, among the *Dissenters* especially, it is called *new light*—but, thank GOD! there are yet some remaining, who call it by its true name—*old darkness*—and as such oppose it.—As it is coincident with the main subject of the following *chapter*, it will fall in my way to say something, which I hope will thoroughly apprize the *reader* of the mischiefs which must result from *Socinianism* in all its shapes.—In the course of what I shall have to say, it will appear, that, so far from CHRIST's ever condemning *polygamy*, which, as a *new lawgiver*, he is supposed to have done, He never mentioned it during the *whole course of His ministry*, but left that, as He did all other *moral* actions of men, upon the footing of that law under which *He was made*, and to which He, for *us men*, and for our *salvation*,



*salvation*, became not only *subject*, but even *obedient unto death*. Phil. ii. 8.

Upon the whole, I take the truth to be, that the first *general institution of marriage*, accompanied with the first *general blessing*, is to be found in those words of Gen. i. 28, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth*.—The special manner of this, together with the indissolubility of the obligation created by it between the parties, is revealed, Gen. ii. 24. where it is said — *A man shall be joined* — רבך — προσκολληθήσεται — agglutinatus erit — *to his woman*—and *they*, as in consequence thereof, *shall become one flesh*, i. e. *inseparable* from each other. Gen. iii. 16. reveals the entire subordination and subjection of the *wife to the husband*—and the rest of the *Bible* shews us, that *virgins* could not be *seduced* and *taken* as *appetite* might *prompt*, and then abandoned and forsaken as *licentiousness* might *incline*—but that *monogamous* and *polygamous* contracts were equally valid and binding, equally lawful as to the inheritableness of the issue, and all other marks of legitimacy, that is to say, on the *man's* side; but that, on the *woman's*, polygamy was, for the most apparently-wise reasons, forbidden under pain of death.

While this system was revered and  
X 2 observed,

observed, we read of no *adultery*, *whoredom*, and *common prostitution* of women among *the daughters of Israel*: no *brothels*, *street-walking*, \* *venereal disease*: no CHILD-MURDER, and those other appendages of female ruin, which are too horrid to particularize. Nor were these things *possible*, which, since the revocation of the divine system, and the establishment of human systems, are become *inevitable*. The supposing our *blessed Saviour* came to destroy the *divine law*, or alter it with respect to marriage, is to suppose Him laying a foundation for the misery and destruction of the weaker sex; whereas no *being* less wicked than *Satan* himself, could ever have devised the almost total departure from GOD'S LAW, which, from even the earliest ages of *the church* since the Apostles'

\* Much has been said concerning the antiquity of this disease. The subject is ably handled, and indeed exhausted, in that learned and laborious work of *Johannes Astruc*, de Morb. Ven. lib. i. I will only here observe, that as the *divine law* punished *adultery*, or the defilement of another's wife, with death in both parties—and *whoredom* was, on the part of the woman, also a *capital offence*—the consequences of *prostitution* must of course be prevented, by the prevention of the thing itself. Besides, the almost universality of marriage among the *Jews* (for *celibacy* was a disgrace) and the fixing the *virgin* on the man who first *took* her, so that he could not *put her away all his days*, left little room for *prostitution*, had their laws been even less severe against it.

times,

times, is to be found among the *Christians*.

I now put an end to this long chapter, in which *polygamy*, divested of all the nonsense of human reasonings, is set in its true *scriptural* light, as not *sinful in itself*, but, in some cases, highly *expedient*—in others—*duty*; and in this last view of it, forming one *link* in that divine chain of *heavenly legislation*, on which the security and protection of the *weaker sex* is suspended; it being, upon the footing of God's law, as impossible for *one man as another*, to *seduce* and abandon to prostitution and ruin, those who have a most *indefeasible claim* upon him for their safety and support.

If among us, as among the *Jews*, and as formerly in *France*, and now in some other parts of the world, a *single man*, be his rank and station what they may, was constrained to marry publicly the woman he seduces; and if the *spirit* of the *divine law* was so far complied with, as to compel the *man already married*, to give security for the maintenance and provision of such woman as he seduces, and, if his present *engagement* shall determine, to *marry publicly* her whom, in God's account, he has *married privately*—it would be such a check upon the licentiousness



of mankind, such a restraint upon what is called *gallantry*—such a security for female chastity—and such a preservative against *prostitution*, as might make those who live to see it say—

*Jam redit & virgo, redeunt Saturnia Regna.*

VIRG.

Now *Justice* and the *Golden Age* again return.

Doubtless, *irregularities* there always were, and always will be, while *human nature* is *human nature*. Still, a vast difference there must be found, between a *system* which is formed as a check to the lust, treachery, and cruelty of mankind, and one which, in *numberless* instances, lets them loose to act without controul.

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#### APPENDIX TO CHAP. IV.

SINCE the preceding *chapter* went to the press, the *author* has been favoured with a transcript from a tract in the *British Museum*, which contains the whole of *Bishop Burnet's* opinion on *polygamy*. The *reader* has before seen it partially quoted; but the whole is here inserted *verbatim*,

“ IS

“ IS *polygamy* in any case *lawful* under  
“ the *gospel*?

“ FOR ANSWER. It is to be *considered*,  
“ that *marriage* is a *contract* founded up-  
“ on the *laws of nature*, its end being  
“ the *propagation of mankind*; and the  
“ *formality* of doing it by *churchmen*, is  
“ only a *superveniens* benediction, or  
“ pompous solemnizing of it; and there-  
“ fore the *nature of marriage*, and not  
“ any *form* used in the celebration of it,  
“ is to be *considered*. It is true, the case  
“ is harder, when any is married by such  
“ a \* *form*, as binds him to one woman,  
“ than

\* The *Bishop* here doubtless alludes to that part  
of our *form*, where the priest is to ask the man—  
“ Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife—  
“ &c.—and, forsaking all other, keep thee *only unto*  
“ *her*, so long as ye both shall live?

“ The man shall answer,

“ I WILL.”

Here is no *decent* qualification, as in the *ordination*  
of ministers—“ I will endeavour so to do, the LORD  
“ being my helper”—“ I trust so”—“ I think so”  
—“ I have so determined, by God’s grace”—or the  
like; but, with the peremptoriness and confidence of  
a *Stoic*, who held—ἐφ’ ἑμὴν ἐστὶν ὅσα ἡμετέρα ἐργα—  
“ all our own actions are in our own power”—ill suit-  
ed to a frail and fallible creature, who knows not  
what a day may bring forth—(see *Prov.* xxvii. 1.  
comp. *Jer.* x. 23.) the answer is to be—I WILL—  
I—REX DOMINUSQUE MEI—I WILL.

The man is afterwards to take her—“ for better  
“ and for worse”—but, be she ever so much worse

“ than where he is bound only by the tie  
“ of marriage, conceived in general terms.

“ The case of mankind, since the fall,  
“ varies very much from what it was in  
“ innocence ; for then the soundness of  
“ their bodies, and purity of their minds,  
“ did keep out of the way all the hazards of barrenness, sickness, uncleanness,  
“ or crossness of humours, which made  
“ the former law not so proper for mankind ; yet still a single marriage was  
“ the perfecter, as being nearer the original.

“ Before the flood, we find Lamech a  
“ polygamist ; such were Abraham and  
“ Jacob after it ; not that this was not  
“ indulged by Moses ; for all that he did

than he took her for, short of actual adultery, still he is to groan under the sore bondage of what is called HIS VOW ; which his fellow-creatures have just as much right to impose upon him, from any authority in scripture, as another set of people had, to make a man vow voluntary poverty—perpetual chastity—and implicit obedience to a fellow-mortal—on becoming a monk.

There was a time when, if such a one had married, the law (see 31 Hen. VIII. c. 14.) would have sent him to the gallows, and no doubt the church would have sent him to the devil. TEMPORA MUTANTUR—well if we could say, as touching all the foolish and unscriptural snares, which mankind have invented, and laid for one another’s consciences—ET NOS MUTAMUR IN ILLIS.

“ relating



“ relating to these affairs, was only to  
 “ allow a DIVORCE, which was a *proviso*  
 “ for the hardness of the hearts of the  
 “ *Israelites*. Every man was bound to  
 “ maintain whom he had first married;  
 “ lest, therefore, such as designed ano-  
 “ ther wife, and could not maintain a  
 “ former, might use *indirect* ways to be  
 “ rid of them, this *fair one* of divorce  
 “ was allowed \* by GOD; and their *poly-*  
 “ *gamy* was practised, without either al-  
 “ lowance or controul, as the *natural pri-*  
 “ *vilege* of mankind. Neither is it any  
 “ where marked among the *blemishes* of  
 “ the patriarchs; David’s wives, and  
 “ store of them he had, are termed by  
 “ the prophet, GOD’s *gift to him*: yea  
 “ *polygamy* was made in *some cases* a duty  
 “ by Moses’s law;—when any died with-  
 “ out issue, his brother, or nearest *kins-*  
 “ *man*, was to marry his wife, for raising  
 “ up seed to him; and all were obliged  
 “ to obey this, under the *hazard* of  
 “ *infamy*, if they refused it; neither is  
 “ there any exceptions made for *such as*  
 “ *were married*. From whence I may

\* I just take the liberty to observe, that it is best  
 to keep to the expression of scripture. Our BLESSED  
 SAVIOUR doth not say, that GOD *allowed divorce*—  
 but—*Moses allowed or permitted it*;—so the Bishop  
 expresses himself a few lines higher.

“ *faithfully*

“ *faithfully* conclude, that what GOD  
 “ made *necessary* in some cases to any de-  
 “ gree, can in *no case be sinful in itself* ;  
 “ since GOD is *holy in all His ways*.

“ But it is now to be examined, if it  
 “ is *forbidden* by the gospel. It is cer-  
 “ tain, that our LORD designed to raise  
 “ mankind to the highest degrees of pu-  
 “ rity and chastity ; and therefore OUR  
 “ LORD and St. PAUL do prefer a *single*  
 “ *life* to a married state \*, as that which  
 “ qualifies us for the kingdom of heaven,  
 “ and was loaded with the fewest in-  
 “ cumbrances ; and by this rule, a *single*  
 “ marriage being next to none at all,  
 “ was certainly more suitable to the go-  
 “ spel” [he means the times of the go-  
 “ spel.] “ But a simple and express *dis-*  
 “ *charge of polygamy* is no where to be  
 “ found.

“ It is true, our LORD discharges *di-*  
 “ *vorces*, except in the case of *adultery* ;  
 “ adding, that whosoever *puts away his*  
 “ *wife* upon any other account, commits  
 “ *adultery* : so St. Luke and St. Matthew  
 “ in one place have it—or *commits adul-*  
 “ *tery against her* : so St. Mark has it—

\* “ This was meant only with respect to *parti-*  
 “ *cular persons in particular circumstances*, such as  
 “ an *apostle* ; which is the reason why St. Paul ap-  
 “ plies it chiefly to himself.” 1 Cor. vii.”

“ or *causes her to commit adultery*: so St. Matthew in another place.

“ ‘ If it be *adultery* then to take another woman after an *unjust divorce*, it will follow that the *wife* has *that right* over the *husband’s* body, that he must *touch no other*.’—This is indeed plausible, and it is all that can be brought from the *New Testament*, which seems convincing; yet it will not be found of weight.

“ For it is to be considered, that if our *Lord* had been to *antiquate polygamy*, it being so deeply rooted in the men of that age, confirmed by such fashions and *unquestioned* precedents, and riveted by so long a practice, he must have done it *plainly* and *authoritatively*, and not in such an involved manner, as to be *sought* out of his words by the *search* of *logick*.

“ Neither are these *dark words* made more clear by any of the *apostles* in their *writings*: words are to be carried no farther, than the *design* upon which they were written will *lead* them to; so that our *LORD* being, in that place, to strike out divorce so *explicitly*, we must not, by a *consequence*, condemn *polygamy*; since it seems *not to have fallen within the scope* of what our *LORD* does there disapprove.

“ Beside,



“ Beside, the term *adultery* may be  
 “ taken in general, for such a *breach* of  
 “ *wedlock* as is equivalent to *adultery*;  
 “ and such is an *unjust divorce*. This may  
 “ be the importance of the phrase used  
 “ by *St. Mark*, viz.—*he committeth adul-*  
 “ *tery against her*; or all may be better  
 “ explained by the phrase *St. Matthew*  
 “ uses about it, in one place—*he causes*  
 “ *her to commit adultery*; since he that  
 “ *exposeth* or *tempteth* to sin, shares in  
 “ *the guilt* with the person that suc-  
 “ cumbs: and from this it appears, that  
 “ *polygamy* is not declared *adultery*, nei-  
 “ ther in the place cited, nor any other  
 “ that I know of.

“ ‘ But it is true that *polygamy* falls  
 “ ‘ short of the intendment of marriage,  
 “ ‘ in *innocency*, to which state, we that  
 “ ‘ are *under the gospel* must return as near  
 “ ‘ as it is possible.’ —It is to be confessed  
 “ that *polygamy* was much condemned by  
 “ the ancients, though I think I have  
 “ met with something about it, that is  
 “ little noticed; but of that I can ad-  
 “ venture to say nothing at this \* distance  
 “ from my books and papers.

“ But

\* How unfairly *Dean Delaney* represents this pas-  
 sage in the *Bishop's* paper, may be seen before, p. 262,  
 where we are to suppose his *Lordship* making “ the  
 “ best

“ But all that being granted, it is to  
 “ be considered that the *antients* were  
 “ *unjust* and *severe* against *marriage* (itself),  
 “ and did excessively favour the *celibate*,  
 “ or single (life); so that in some places,  
 “ they who married a *second* time, were  
 “ put to do *penance* for it; and, indeed,  
 “ both *Jew* and *Gentile* had run into  
 “ such *excess* by their free commixtures,  
 “ that it is no wonder if the holy men  
 “ of those ages, being provoked to a just  
 “ zeal, against such unjust practices,  
 “ must have been carried, through im-  
 “ moderate swaying of the counterpoize,  
 “ into some extremes on the *other hand*.

“ Therefore, to conclude this *short*  
 “ *answer*, wherein many things are  
 “ hinted, which might have been en-  
 “ larged into a volume, I see nothing  
 “ so strong against *polygamy*, as to ba-  
 “ lance the *great* and visible *imminent*  
 “ hazards that hang over so many *thou-*  
 “ *sands*, if it be not *allowed*.”

The *author* cannot help expressing the  
 highest satisfaction in finding, that in

“ best excuse he could, for giving a *rash opinion*”  
 —whereas, he seems to give the circumstance of  
 being at “ a distance from his books and papers,”  
 as a reason for not producing testimonies from the  
*antients* “ little noticed,” but which, if produced,  
 would tend to shew, that some of them thought  
 as his *Lordship* did upon the subject.

what he has written on the subject, he has had the honour of coinciding, in so many points, with the sentiments of this learned, judicious, and excellent *Bishop*. But, on the other hand, he must express his sorrow, that his *Lordship* was so far “distant from his books and papers,” otherwise, it is most probable, that he would have produced some valuable testimonies from the *antients*, concerning what he hints at as—“*little noticed*.”

Another thing is also to be lamented, which is, that the good *Bishop* did not proceed to explain what he meant by those “great and visible imminent hazards,” mentioned in the last paragraph.

If so small and inconsiderable a person as myself may venture to guess at the meaning of so considerable and great a man as *Bishop Burnet*, I should suppose, that his *Lordship* has here a reference to his observation before made, concerning the difference between the state of *innocency*, and that of mankind since the *fall*, and to those *evils* which he mentions as the consequences of the *latter*—which could not exist during the *former*. Such as “*barrenness, sickness, uncleanness, or crossness of humour*.” What “great, imminent, and visible hazards hang over *thousands*,” from these causes, has been observed



observed before, p. 181—184. To vindicate, therefore, the lawfulness of *polygamy* is, as the world is now constituted, in *such cases* at least, to act as a good *citizen of the world*, by vindicating the “*natural privileges*,” and necessary *rights* of mankind; and it is, at the same time, to act as a sincere believer of *divine revelation*, to set forth, openly and without disguise, that *HEAVENLY SYSTEM*, by which those *rights* are established and secured. To vindicate also that *universal law*, which had the good of the *WHOLE* for its object; to shew that its *wisdom* and *beneficence* are too *VAST* to be confined to a *single people*, or a single period of *particular dispensation*—to free it from that obscurity which *monks* and *priests*, and other *enthusiasts* and *fanatics*, have involved it in, to the distress and destruction of millions—is a task reserved *alone* for those, who, for the sake of *truth*, are willing to sacrifice their ease and *reputation* to the malevolence of *ignorance* and *prejudice*.

## CHAP. V.

CHRIST not the Giver of a new Law.

**M**OSHEIM, (Eccl. Hist. MacLaine's edition, quarto, vol. i. p. 295) very justly observes—"When once the ministers of the church had departed from the antient simplicity of religion, abuses were daily multiplied; and superstition drew, from its horrid fecundity, an incredible number of absurdities, which were added to the doctrine of CHRIST and his apostles."—This is very true, and very strikingly exemplified in that learned and accurate writer's history of the *Christian church*, both with regard to *ceremonies* and *doctrines*. Among other absurdities in point of *doctrine*, is the notion that "CHRIST's mission upon earth was to exhibit to mortals a new law, distinguished from all others by its unblemished sanctity and perfection." In vol. ii. p. 277. this is represented as one main article of the *Socinian* creed, and it is to be wished that it never had been adopted but by the immediate followers of *Socinus*. Yet this  
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is the language we hear daily, and is at the bottom of that extravagant notion expressed by *Gronovius* on *Grotius De Jure*, tom. i. p. 274, octavo, 1735.—maintained by many learned men, and even adopted as an axiom by the generality of Christians, as much as the *Pope's* supremacy and infallibility were before the *Reformation*—namely, that—“*Lex naturæ & veteris fœderis concedunt polygamiā*”—*The law of \* nature, and of the*  
 “*Old*

\* By *lex naturæ*, or law of nature, I understand here (as *Gronovius* joins it with the *lex veteris fœderis*—the law of the old covenant—) that *lex non scripta*, or unwritten law, given of God to Adam, and from him derived by tradition to the people of God till the time of *Moses*, when the *lex scripta*, or written law, was given by *Moses*. See *John* i. 17. former part, and *Rom.* v. 13. Both these laws are in substance one and the same. The moral obligation of each demanded the same obedience; the ceremonial institutions of both pointed out the same sacrifice and atonement for sin. Neither of these laws forbade polygamy, therefore it was practised by *Abraham*—*Jacob*, and doubtless many others who lived under what is called the patriarchal dispensation—as well as by the *Jews* under the *Mosaic* dispensation. As for what is generally understood by the law of nature, the offspring of what is called the light of nature, it is best described by—

*Monstrum, horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum.*

Let those who think I carry this matter too far, consult *Rom.* i. 21, &c. which passage of *holy writ* may be looked upon as a summary of what is said in the *Old Testament*, of the depravity, blindness,



*Old Testament, allow polygamy, but it is forbidden—"Lege CHRISTI"—by the law of CHRIST. This appears to be the opinion of Grotius in that place on which Gronovius comments: for he says—"Ex  
 "CHRISTI lege irritum est conjugium  
 "cum eo qui maritus sit alterius mulieris,  
 "ob jus illud quod CHRISTUS foeminae  
 "pudicitiam fervanti dedit in maritum."*  
*—By the law of CHRIST, a marriage with  
 a man who is the husband of another woman,  
 is void and of none effect, by reason of the  
 right which CHRIST gave to the woman,  
 who preserves her chastity, over her hus-  
 band. Here then CHRIST is set up to  
 exhibit to mortals a new law, and that,*

*ignorance, and wickedness of the fallen human na-  
 ture. This is abundantly confirmed by all history,  
 and daily experience. Dr. Alexander, Hist. of Wom.  
 vol. i. p. 169, says, very truly—"Man, in that  
 "rude and uncultivated state in which he originally  
 "appears in all countries, before he has been form-  
 "ed by society, and instructed by experience, is  
 "an animal, differing but little from the wild  
 "beasts that surround him." Here let me once  
 more recommend to the reader's perusal, Dr. LE-  
 LAND'S *Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Re-  
 velation*. There he will see a very authentic ac-  
 count of what MAN is, "though formed by society,  
 "and instructed by experience," without the light  
 of divine revelation. This, not as it respects the  
 vulgar and illiterate, but those also who are handed  
 down to us, as most eminent for wisdom, learning,  
 and philosophy.—THE WORLD BY WISDOM KNEW  
 NOT GOD. 1 Cor. i. 21. Comp. Job xi. 7, 8.*

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in opposition to *the law of nature* and of the *Old Testament*, as *Gronovius* expresses it. How this idea harmonizes with the *heresy* of *Socinus*, may appear from the short view which we have of the *Socinian theology*, *Mosh.* vol. ii. p. 276.—“ God, “ who is infinitely more perfect than man, “ though of a similar nature in some re- “ spects, exerted an act of that power by “ which He governs all things, in con- “ sequence of which an extraordinary “ person was born of the *Virgin Mary*. “ That person was JESUS CHRIST, whom “ God first translated to heaven, and hav- “ ing instructed Him fully there in the “ knowledge of His will, counsels, and “ designs, sent Him again into this sub- “ lunar world to promulgate to man- “ kind a *new rule of life, more excellent “ than that under which they had formerly “ lived*, to propagate the truth by His “ ministry, and to confirm it by His “ death.” Thus blasphemed *Socinus* against the excellence, purity, and per- fection of the law of JEHOVAH, as well as against the glory and divinity of the *Son of God* ! However, this notion about a *new law* given by CHRIST, is not to be called the invention of *Socinus*, who lived so late as the 16th century ; it was a doctrine of the *Koran*, when the im-

postor \* *Mahomet* set up his religion ; for we are there informed, that, “ of 224,000 “ *prophets* which have from time to time “ been sent into the world—among whom “ 313 were *apostles*, sent with special “ commissions to reclaim mankind from “ infidelity and superstition—*six* of them “ brought *new laws* for that purpose, “ which successively *abrogated the pre-* “ *ceding*. These were 1. *Adam*, 2. *Noah*, “ 3. *Abraham*, 4. *Moses*, 5. *Jesus*, 6. *Ma-* “ *bomet*.” See Broughton, Hist. Lib. Tit. *Mohammed*.

It was fundamentally necessary for *Mahomet*'s plan, to have it believed that God had sent several prophets into the world, who had successively abrogated the laws of those who had gone before : for as *Mahomet*'s intention was to appear as such an one himself, he very artfully kept his followers from looking after the credentials of his mission in the writings of the *Old and New Testaments* ; for had he appealed to these himself, or referred his followers to *their* evidence of his mission from God, He must have appeared as

\* Earlier still—“ *Lactantius* considers CHRIST's mission as having *no other* end, than that of leading mankind to virtue, by the most *sublime precepts*, and the most *perfect example*.” *Mosheim*, vol. i. 188, note h, century 4th.



great an *impostor* in their eyes, as doubtless he was in his \* own.

The *blessed Jesus* proved the reality of His mission, by a course directly contrary to this, for, in all his *teaching*, He constantly appealed to the *law* and the *prophets*—"It is written," was His warrant for all He said and did—He founded all His claim to the character of the MESSIAH, on the writings of the † Old Testament, and all His *miracles* were a constant appeal to what was there foretold concerning him. So far from assuming to Himself the authority of abrogating that holy, perfect, and spiritual *rule of life*, which was contained in the law given from God by *Moses*, He began His public ministry with the most solemn protest against such a supposition. Therefore, to contend for his enacting any *new*

\* *Mahomet* was too cunning not to be sensible of this. Therefore he got rid of all danger from their authorities, by making it believed that the *pentateuch*, *psalms*, and *gospels* were so altered and corrupted, that little credit was to be given to them—That God had promised to take care of the *Koran*, and to preserve it from any *addition* or *diminution*. *Koran*, c. 15.

† So His fore-runner, *John the Baptist*, appealed to the Old Testament for the truth of his mission. See Matt. iii. 3. Luke iii. 4—6, with John i. 22, 23.

law, contrary to the *law of nature*, and of the *Old Testament*, is to call in question His veracity, and to place Him in a rank of *imposture* even below *Mahomet* himself. *Mahomet* professed to destroy the *law* and the *prophets*, as they had destroyed all *preceding systems*: whereas CHRIST most solemnly declared—that *heaven and earth* could sooner pass, than one jot or tittle pass from the *law*—*Think not*, said He, *that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil*. So far from abrogating the *law*, or *rule of life*, which had been delivered by the hand of *Moses*, or setting up a *new law* in opposition to it—He came into the world to be subject to it in all things, and so to fulfil the *whole righteousness* of it. Matt. iii. 15. *To magnify and make it honourable*. Is. xlii. 21. even by *His obedience unto death*. Speaking in the *spirit of prophecy* (Ps. xl. 8.) He says—*Lo—I come—in the volume of the book it is written of me—I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, THY LAW is within my heart*. And in His public ministry, how uniformly doth he speak the same thing? How does He disclaim the imputation of abrogating the *law of God*, and of setting up any *new law* of His own, in opposition to it? *He whom God hath sent*, said He, *speak-*  
eth

*eth the words of GOD. John iii. 34.—My doctrine is not MINE, but His that sent me. John vii. 16, 17.—If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of GOD, or whether I speak of MYSELF. John viii. 28.—I do nothing of MYSELF, but as my Father hath taught me I speak these things. John xii. 49, 50.—I have not spoken of MYSELF, but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work. John iv. 34.—This is not the language of one who came to abrogate GOD's law, as delivered by Moses, and to set up a new law of His own, contrary to the rule of life revealed in the Old Testament, but of one who came to fulfil the righteousness of the law, every precept of which He revered, whose every commandment He perfectly obeyed.*

Let the reader turn to his *Bible*, and consider what is said of the law of GOD—*Pf. xix. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and throughout the whole long 119th psalm, and surely he must say, that the idea of a more excellent law, or rule of life, than is therein set forth, is as replete with folly, as it is with blasphemy. The same testimony which the Old Testament bears to the*



*perfection* of the *divine law*, is also borne in the New Testament. When CHRIST delivers that summary of it, *Mark xii. 30, 31*, under the two heads of *the love of GOD with all the heart*—and the love of our neighbour as of ourselves—He says—*There is NONE OTHER commandment greater than these.* So Paul, (*Rom. vii. 12.*) *The law is holy, and the commandment holy—just—and good.* And again (*ver. 14.*) *The law is spiritual.*—Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, saith the Psalmist, *for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.* *Pf. cxliiii. 2.*—For by the deeds of the law there shall be no flesh justified in his sight, saith the apostle, *Rom. iii. 20.* And again, *Rom. iii. 19.* *Whatever things the law saith, it saith to them, that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before GOD.* After all this, to talk of “a more excellent law—a more pure and perfect rule of life,” goes beyond folly, it borders upon madness.

But as *madness* is usually allowed to be so far consistent with itself, as to *argue right*, though from *wrong principles*, we must observe that this scheme of abrogating the *old law*, and of introducing a *new one*, was a necessary and consistent part of the *Socinian plan*—to suffer a *rule of life*

life to remain, which, from its *purity and holiness*, concluded all men under *sin*, and *condemnation*, so that no flesh could be justified by it—and, at the same time, to deny the necessity of a *vicarious satisfaction and atonement* (which is the very marrow of the *Socinian* heresy)—was to render the salvation of man *impossible*. *Socinus*, therefore, to establish a consistent plan, abrogates the *divine law* as delivered by *Moses*, by which man cannot be saved, and introduces a *new law* (called the *law of CHRIST*) by which he might be saved. This made way for the rest of the *Socinian* scheme, so that the divinity of *CHRIST's* person—His *vicarious obedience*—*sufferings*—*atonement*—and *satisfaction*—being rendered unnecessary, were all struck out of the *Socinian gospel*. Thus the pride of fallen man's reason, or rather the reasonings of his pride, are made to triumph over the wisdom of *God*. But as in all wickedness there is *folly*, so in this; for if no man could be justified by a law *less excellent, pure, and perfect*, how could he be saved by one that is *more* so? This has been seen by the *Socinians*; therefore—*sincerity* is their gospel obedience, and if they fail here (as fail they must) a *sincere desire to obey* will serve the turn.—Thus ends the *Socinian*, with the *Mahometan*,  
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in the destruction both of the *law and the gospel*: and CHRIST, like *Mahomet*, is to annihilate *Moses* and the *prophets*!

If we attend to our *Saviour's* preaching, and especially to that heavenly discourse delivered from the *Mount*, we shall find Him a most zealous advocate for the law of GOD, as delivered by *Moses*. We shall find Him stripping it of the false glosses, by which the Jewish *rabbies* had obscured or perverted its meaning, and restoring it to that purity and spirituality by which it reacheth even to *the thoughts and intents of the heart*. For instance, when He is about to enter upon a faithful exposition of the *moral law*, lest his hearers should imagine, that what he was about to say, was contrary to the law of the Old Testament, being so different from the teaching of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, He prefaces his discourse with those remarkable words—Matt. v. 17—20. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil; for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.* So far from abrogating the old rule of life delivered from GOD by *Moses*, no one single part of it, not a sentence—a word—a letter—a bit of a letter, was to be destroyed. *Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least com-*  
mandments,



*mandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. What commandments were these? The sequel shews that they were the commandments of the moral law, or rule of life, delivered from God by Moses. For except your righteousness (or conformity to those commandments, which ought to be internal and spiritual) exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (which was merely outward and formal) ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. He then enters upon an exposition of the sixth commandment, which He vindicates from the bare, outward, literal construction, received by old tradition, and taught by the Scribes and Pharisees—Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment—but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say—Thou fool—shall be in danger of hell-fire.—This—“ I say unto you”—does not imply that CHRIST meant to abrogate God’s law against murder, and to set up a new law of His own instead thereof—but to shew the people,*

people, that what they had been taught by the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, after the *tradition of the elders*, namely, to look upon the *sixth* commandment as reaching only to the *outward act* of *murder*, was false, for that, in the *spiritual* view and intendment of *that law*, it forbad every temper which resembled it, or could lead to it; such as violent, causeless, unprovoked anger, or any malicious inclination of the heart, breaking forth and shewing itself in opprobrious and injurious language; these are as contrary to the *law of the second table*, — *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* — in their nature and tendency, as *murder* itself. So 1 John iii. 15. *He that hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*

CHRIST then proceeds to explain the *seventh* commandment. *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that, whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.* This — “*but I say unto you*” — does not imply that CHRIST meant to repeal the *seventh* commandment, but to explain it, as he had done the *sixth*, and to shew that it not only meant to forbid the act of *defiling another's wife* (γυνᾱμα) but even indulging in the heart an *evil desire* towards her.

Whereas

Whereas the *Scribes and Pharisees*, after the *tradition of the elders*, stuck to the *outward letter*, and taught, that nothing but the *outward act* was a *breach of this law*. What our LORD said here was no *new* commandment, but what was implied in the *tenth* commandment—*Thou shalt not covet* (lust after) *thy neighbour's wife*. So Prov. xxiv. 9. *The thought of foolishness is sin.*

Again. Ye have heard that it has been said by them of old time, *Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the LORD thine oaths.* But I say unto you, Swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is GOD's throne, nor by the earth, for it is His footstool, &c.—but let your communication be *yea, yea, and nay, nay*; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. OUR LORD, by His—"but I say unto you"—doth not enact any *new law*, but explains and restores the honour of the *third* commandment—*Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy GOD in vain.* This evidently forbids all vain and rash swearing, and the use of GOD's holy name (לשוא) in vain, to no purpose, in men's communication with each other. Even swearing by the *creatures*, is an interpretative breach of this commandment; for, as OUR LORD shews, there is no *creature* but hath some *relation* to GOD.

Ye



*Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also, &c.* This refers to *Exod. xxi. 24*, where the law of retaliation was enacted, to be administered by the judges of Israel in a judicial way, on the lawful conviction of offenders: but the Jews, who were taught to abuse every thing, made this a rule of proceeding in their own private acts of revenge upon one another. Such a temper and disposition as this was very sinful to indulge, much more so to gratify; OUR LORD therefore checks this, by teaching patience and forbearance, and doing good to, rather than injuring, *their enemies*. But still here is no new law, the Old Testament taught the same. *Exod. xxiii. 4, 5.* *If thou meet thine enemy's ass or his ox going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.*—*Prov. xxiv. 17.* *Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth, lest the LORD see it and it displease Him.*—*Prov. xxv. 21.* *If thine enemy hunger, give him bread to eat; if he be thirsty, give him water to drink.*—*Lev. xix. 17, 18.* *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart*  
—*thou*

—*thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. I am the LORD.* All this is but saying what CHRIST says in other words.—This doctrine is enforced by *example*, as well as taught by *precept*, in the Old Testament. See 1 Sam. xxiv. 17, 18, 19, with Ps. vii. 4. But what a bright example have we, of rewarding *evil with good*, in the character of Joseph? Gen. xlv. &c.

*Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away.* This is the very language of Deut. xv. 8, 10.

*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy:* they certainly had heard such a doctrine from the Scribes and Pharisees, but it was false; the law said, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour*, but in no part of it, *Thou shalt hate thine enemy*—directly the contrary, Lev. xix. 18. Yet what numbers of people are there, that believe it did allow hatred to enemies, and that the forgiveness of them, and doing them good, was never known till CHRIST preached it! The apostle tells us—*Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* Rom. xiii. 10. What law is meant, appears ver. 8, 9; not a new law of CHRIST, but the old law delivered from God by Moses.

*Moses.* As there is but one lawgiver (James iv. 12.) so there is but one law\*.

More instances of the truth above contended for might be adduced, but I will refer the reader to but one more on this part of the subject, wherein, if CHRIST could ever have had the least intention of abrogating the *old rule of life*, given from God by *Moses*, and setting up a *new one of his own*, he had a fair opportunity of declaring it.—Matt. xix. 16. *One came unto him, and said, Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? He said unto him, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto Him, Which? JESUS said, Thou shalt do no murder—thou shalt not commit adultery—thou shalt not steal—thou shalt not bear false witness—honour thy father and thy mother—and—thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? JESUS said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in hea-*

\* Nothing can be clearer upon this point, than our SAVIOUR'S summary of all He had been saying on the subject of relative duties, throughout the whole of His divine discourse. Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for—THIS IS THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

ven;



ven; and come and follow me. The use which I would make of this scripture, is to shew that every necessary requisite for *entering into life*, as far as the *second table* of the law is concerned, is here set down—but we find not a syllable of any *new law*, or one *jot or tittle* subtracted from the *old*. The *old law* is repeated word for word, and summed up in its spiritual sense and import in the last sentence, which occurs in the Old Testament in just the same words. See Lev. xix. 18. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*.—The proof which our LORD required of this man's *sincerity*, that of *giving to the poor*, was as much a duty under the Old Testament as under the *new*. See Deut. xv. 7—11, and Ps. xli. 1. The *following CHRIST* was so far from being a *new law*, that it was the *only way to heaven* which GOD ever revealed since *the fall of man*. Comp. Deut. xviii. 15, with Acts iii. 22, 23, 24, and Matt. xvii. 5.

But it hath been urged, that CHRIST declared Himself to introduce a *new law*, John xiii. 34. where He saith, *A new commandment give I unto you*. The context runs thus: *A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another*.—By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. It surely cannot

be meant, that, by the term "*new commandment*," we are to understand the introduction of some law totally *new in itself*, without evident *inconsistency*, and absolute *contradiction*: for OUR LORD says, Matt. xxii. 39, 40. *To love our neighbour as ourselves*, is one of the *two great commandments*, on which hang ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS. And St. John speaks of our loving one another, as an *old commandment which we had from the beginning*. Comp. 1 John ii. 7, with 2 John v. St. Paul saith, Rom. xiii. 8. *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another—he that loveth another fulfillet the law*. For this—*thou shalt not commit adultery—thou shalt not kill—thou shalt not bear false witness—thou shalt not covet—and if there be any OTHER COMMANDMENT, it is briefly comprehended in this saying—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW. Comp. 2 John 5, 6. Demonstration cannot be clearer, if these passages be duly considered, that CHRIST could not mean, by a *new commandment*, one that had never before existed, but to establish the *old commandment* among His disciples, not only on the footing of its general obligation as they were men, but also on that *special* consideration of their relation to Him, and to one another as His disciples,

disciples, so as, if need were, to lay down *their lives for each other*. The inforcing this by a *new example*—on *new obligations*, on *new motives*—is the meaning of CHRIST's calling the *law of brotherly love* a *new commandment*. So his disciple John, (1 John iii. 14.) *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren;* and ver. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of GOD, because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* Something like this intense affection we read of in the Old Testament. From what other motive could Moses speak, when he said, on the behalf of his *offending brethren* (Exod. xxxii. 32.) *Oh this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold! (ver. 31.) yet now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin, and if not, BLOT ME, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.* See also 2 Sam. xxiv. 17, where David pleads with GOD for the people, *when he saw the angel that smote them, and said—I have sinned, I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.* How were both these great men eminent types of the good Shepherd, who laid down His life for the sheep! John x. 11. Here we may also observe the amiable and affectionate conduct of Abigail, when, on



the behalf of her churlish husband *Nabal*, she ventured forth to meet the angry *David* and *his men*, 1 Sam. xxv. 18, 22, 23, taking *his* fault upon *herself*. Upon *ME*, said she, *my lord*, let *this iniquity* be, and let *thine hand-maid*, I pray thee, speak in *thine audience*, and bear the words of *thine hand-maid*: then follows, to ver. 32. one of the most noble, though simple instances of the perfection and persuasiveness of eloquence that we meet with, even in the *sacred writings*: one would almost think that *Virgil* had this transaction and that of *David's* in his view, when he wrote the speech of *Nisus* to the *Rutulians*, on the behalf of *Euryalus*, as much as that he had the prophecy of *Isaiah* before him, when he wrote his *Poëto*.

*Me, Me, adsum qui feci, in Me convertite ferrum ;*  
*O Rutuli, mea fraus omnis ; nihil iste nec ausus*  
*Nec potuit—Calum hoc & conscia Sydera testor.*

So in the friendship between *David* and *Jonathan*—1 Sam. xviii. 1.—where it is said—the *soul of Jonathan* was knit with the *soul of David*, and *Jonathan* loved him as his own *soul*: and ver. 3.—then *Jonathan* and *David* made a covenant, because he loved him as his own *soul*. And we actually find *Jonathan* interposing with *Saul* on the behalf of *David*, even at the *risque* of his

*his own life.* 1 Sam. xx. 32, 33. So David's affection to *Absalom*—*would to God I had died for thee, my son!* 2 Sam. xviii. 33. And, to the shame of *us Christians* be it spoken, this heroic and disinterested friendship is even to be found among the *Heathen* (in notion at least) witness the fine and beautiful story of *Nysus* and *Euryalus*. Virg. *Æn.* ix. l. 427, &c. Even *Epicurus* could say, "that a wise man will sometimes die for his friend." See Leland, vol. 2. p. 96.

"But we meet with the very expression—the law of CHRIST, Gal. vi. 2.—*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of CHRIST.*"—By *bearing one another's burdens* (a metaphor taken from easing another by carrying a burden for him, or assisting him in carrying it) I should apprehend that we are to understand, what the *Apostle* expresses—Rom. xii. 15.—by *weeping with them that weep*; i. e. so to be affected with *their sorrows*, as even to make them *our own*, and to be as assiduous in their removal, or alleviation, as we should be *were they our own* \*. But is this a *new law* of CHRIST, in opposition to, inconsistent with, or differing from, the law of the

\* This sympathetic tenderness is finely touched by the *Apostle*, 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26.

Old Testament? Rather, doth not this fall under—*thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*? This was to be observed under the Old Testament, as well as under the New; we find this exemplified in those familiar instances put Deut. xxii. 1—4. Nor was this to be confined to *friends* only, but to be extended to *enemies*. Exod. xxiii. 4, 5. Though the *letter* of these laws expressed only things comparatively trivial, yet, doubtless, the spirit of them extended to matters of more serious consequence, and were rules for their conduct towards each other in whatever calamities they or theirs might be involved: a very striking instance of this appears (Ps. xxxv. 12, 13, 14.) in the behaviour David observed with respect to some of his ungrateful enemies—*they rewarded me evil for good, to the spoiling of my soul* (שָׂרַף to the depriving it of comfort.) But as for me, when they were sick (or afflicted, as חלה also signifies) my clothing was sackcloth—I humbled my soul with fasting—I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother—I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother.

However, by the \* law of CHRIST, I take

\* Those phrases—the law of CHRIST—the Christian law—the law of the gospel—the morality of the gospel—the law of the New Testament—as they are commonly



take something more to be meant than as to the *doctrine* which He taught in conformity to the *law of love*. I do suppose that here is a reference to the *example* He

commonly used and understood, have greatly confounded the ideas of mankind with regard to true and genuine *Christianity*, and have added no little strength to the cause of *Socinianism*.

All this arises from a want of duly considering and understanding the *nature, use, and properties* of the *divine law*, as well as the place it holds in the *economy* of the covenant of redemption.

Its nature.—*Spiritual—holy—just—and good*—therefore can never save, but be the ministration of death and condemnation to us as transgressors and guilty creatures. So that which was *ordained unto life* to the *innocent*, must be *found to be unto death* to the guilty. See Rom. vii. 10, 12, 14. 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9.

Its use.—To *convince of sin*—and thus to lead the sinner to the atonement, satisfaction, righteousness, and death of CHRIST, for pardon, justification, acceptance, and life eternal. See Rom. vii. 7, 8, 9, 10. Gal. ii. 19, &c.; iii. 19, &c.

Its properties.—Being *written in the heart*, and *put into the mind*, it becomes a *rule of life* to the believer, an *holy directory* to shew him how he ought to walk and to please GOD; and, in the sight of the *purity, perfection, and holiness* of the *divine law*, to live under constant self-abasement, and deep humility, *looking for the mercy of our LORD JESUS CHRIST unto eternal life*. See Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Eph. ii. 10. Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13. Jude 21. Phil. iii. 9.

Those who live under a *practical* view of these things, are not only *almost*, but altogether *Christians*, and can no more think of a *new law*, than of a *new gospel*. Having drank of the *old wine* of *divine truth*, they desire not the *new wine* of *human error* (Luke v. 39.) *for they say the old is better.*

set—to the *principle of action* (for so *νομος* sometimes is to be understood—see Rom. vii. 21.) which led Him to bear our burden of *guilt* and *punishment*, when *He himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree*, 1 Pet. ii. 24. according to the prophecy that went before, Is. liii. 4. *Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He suffered, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps*; and in particular, by observing the same *rule or principle of action* towards each other as He did towards us, in bearing, alleviating, removing *each other's burdens* of affliction and sorrow, by every means in our power. The *νομος*—law—or rule—which CHRIST acted by towards us, is proposed to our imitation, with respect to the *forgiveness of injuries*, (Col. iii. 13.) *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as CHRIST forgave you, so also do ye.* So that when a man forgives an injury upon this principle, he may be said to *fulfil the law of CHRIST* in this respect, by acting agreeably to the *rule—law—or principle of CHRIST* towards His redeemed people. But what is there in all this inconsistent with the Old Testament, or that is not exactly conformable to it? CHRIST did nothing for us but what the Old Testament exactly foretold. Acts xxvi. 22, 23. The  
Apostle,

*Apostle*, in this passage of *Gal. vi. 2.* says only, in other words, what is said, *1 John iv. 11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* So our LORD, *John xiii. 34. That ye love one another, as I have loved you.* As it is written, *Is. lxiii. 8, 9. He was their Saviour; in all their affliction He was afflicted.* How then ought *Christians* to observe this rule towards each other! How ought they to weep with them that weep—as well as rejoice with them that do rejoice!—Who is weak, and I am not weak?—saith Paul, *2 Cor. xi. 29. Who is offended, and I burn not?* Did CHRIST bear our burden—was this the voice—the principle of action—the rule—the law—which governed Him in all He did and suffered for us? then let us fulfil this law towards each other, by interesting ourselves in each other's welfare and prosperity; so as, by our consolation, advice, and every other means in our power, to comfort those that mourn—raise up them that are cast down—bind up the broken-hearted—and, in the spirit of meekness, restore those that are \* fallen. Thus

\* This is the more immediate sense of the *Apostle*, *Gal. vi. 2.* as appears by the context; but yet I have given a larger sense to the words, as doubtless containing a rule for the conduct of *Christians* to each other under all their burdens, from whatever cause they may be derived.

*shall*



shall we bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of CHRIST. See If. lxi. 1, 2, 3.

I have observed above (p. 327) that the idea of CHRIST's setting up a *new law* in opposition to the law of the Old Testament, as more *pure* \* and *holy*, is equally replete with *folly* and *blasphemy*. This is true; for it not only carries us into the fundamental principle on which *Mahomet* founded his *Koran*, and into the very *sink* of *Socinianism*—but it sets forth CHRIST as *finding fault* with the law of GOD as delivered by *Moses*, and opposing Himself to it. This runs us, though we perceive it not, very near the borders of that monster of *heresy* CERINTHUS, and his *followers*, against whom *St. John* is supposed to have written the beginning of his gospel. They taught, that—“ the Creator of this  
“ world, who was also the sovereign and  
“ lawgiver of the *Jewish* people, was a  
“ Being endowed with the greatest vir-  
“ tues, and derived his birth from the  
“ supreme God : That this Being fell by  
“ degrees from His native virtue and pri-

\* “ At CHRISTI lex, ut res alias, ita & hanc  
“ conjugii inter *Christianos* ad perfectiorem redegit  
“ normam.”—“ But the law of CHRIST reduced, as  
“ it did other things, this *law of marriage* to a more  
“ perfect rule among *Christians*.” Grot. de Jure,  
lib. ii. c. 5. § 2.

“ mitive

“ mitive dignity : That the supreme God,  
 “ in consequence of this, determined to  
 “ destroy His empire, and sent upon earth,  
 “ for this purpose, one of the ever-happy  
 “ and glorious *Æons*, whose name was  
 “ CHRIST ; that this CHRIST chose for  
 “ His habitation the person of JESUS, a  
 “ man of the most illustrious sanctity and  
 “ justice, the son of *Joseph and Mary*,  
 “ and, descending in the form of a dove,  
 “ entered into Him, while He was re-  
 “ ceiving the baptism of *John* in the wa-  
 “ ters of *Jordan* : That JESUS, after His  
 “ union with CHRIST, OPPOSED HIM-  
 “ SELF WITH VIGOUR TO THE GOD OF  
 “ THE JEWS, and was, by His instiga-  
 “ tion, seized and crucified by the *Hebrew*  
 “ chiefs.—*Cerintbus* required of his fol-  
 “ lowers, that they should ABANDON THE  
 “ LAWGIVER OF THE JEWS, whom he  
 “ looked upon as the creator of the world;  
 “ that they should retain *a part of the law*  
 “ *given by Moses*, but should nevertheless  
 “ employ their principal attention and  
 “ care to REGULATE THEIR LIVES BY  
 “ THE PRECEPTS OF CHRIST.” *Mosh.*  
 vol. i. p. 69. Which said *precepts* are  
 supposed to be the *precepts* of one who op-  
 posed himself with vigour to the God of the  
*Jewish* people, and whose disciples were  
 to abandon the lawgiver of the *Jews*, tho’  
 they

they were to admit him to be the *Creator of the world!*

Here then, reader, I have lifted up the *bive*, and out has flown the *swarm*, not a *swarm* of useful and industrious *bees*, but a *swarm* (ערב a mixture) like that in *Ægypt*, *Exod. viii. 24.* which was *grievous*, and *corrupted the land*. Here is to be seen those pestilential insects from whence sprung *Arianism—Socinianism—Mahometism—Antinomianism—Neonomianism*, and all the *isms* which have plagued, harrassed, and distressed, divided, and disgraced the church ever since.

Such is the picture of the *Cerinthians*. Surely we cannot survey it attentively, without recognizing a similitude of some of the features, at least something which may be called a strong *family likeness* to the idea of “polygamy’s being allowed” by the law of nature and of *the Old Testament* (that is by the God of the *Jews*) but forbidden by the *law of CHRIST*, which is contrary to both.

If it be possible to produce a single *law of CHRIST*, which opposes the law of the *Old Testament*, all his claim to the character of the *Messiah* is at an end; for the *Messiah* was *to be made of a woman made under the law. Gal. iv. 4.—subject to its every precept, obedient to its every command—and doubtless therefore to that solemn command,*



command, which, for the greater solemnity, is repeated *twice over*—*Ye shall not ADD to the word which I command you, neither shall ye DIMINISH aught from it.* Deut. iv. 2. xii. 32. How could the BLESSED JESUS be said to *fulfil all righteousness*, by a perfect conformity to *all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*—how say, as He doth by the Psalmist, Ps. xl. 8. *Lo I come to do thy will—not mine own.*—John vi. 38. *I am content to do it—thy law is within my heart*—if he either ADDED to the rule of life given from God by Moses, or DIMINISHED from it? How could he be said to observe the law in ALL THINGS—how give that holy challenge to the Jews, John viii. 46. *Which of you convinceth me of sin?*—if he abrogated the law, the rule given as touching the moral actions of men, in any one instance, and set up a law of his own in opposition to it?

The false CHRIST of Cerinthus and of the Socinian, and the true CHRIST of GOD, are discernable by this essential difference—The first opposed himself with vigour to the GOD of the Jews—required that his disciples should abandon the law given by Moses, and regulate themselves by some new precepts of his own.—The Holy CHRIST of GOD declared—that not a jot or tittle was to pass from the law—that He came not to destroy, but to fulfil it—His whole teaching, practice,

*practice, and example, magnified the law, and made it honourable. Therefore He exactly answered to the character given of Him in the Old Testament. He finished the transgression—made an end of sins—made reconciliation for iniquity—and brought in (by his sinless, perfect, and meritorious obedience) an everlasting righteousness, for the justification and salvation of his people to all eternity.*

“ But what shall we say of the ordinances of *Baptism and the Lord's Supper*, are not these CHRIST's own institutions, established by his own authority ?”—To this I answer—that these *two sacraments* were to succeed *circumcision and the passover*, which were the two *sacramental ordinances* of the *Mosaic dispensation*, the whole of which was to cease and *vanish away* on the coming of the *Messiah*.

Another *priest* was to arise, not after the order of *Aaron*, but after the order of *Melchizedeck*, (Ps. cx. iv.) and this, according to the *prophecies* which went before. Now, as the excellent *Bishop Hall* observes, “ some actions are prophecies,” and he instances in the history of the *brazen serpent* the truth of his position; he might have instanced in many more: and among the rest, in the history of *Melchizedeck*, of whom it is said, that he was a priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed

*blessed him.* Heb. vii. 1. In Gen. xiv. 18. it is said—And *Melchizedeck*, king of *Salem*, brought forth bread and wine, and *blessed Abraham.* ver. 19. In this propheticall action is exhibited a type of CHRIST, the *priest after the order of Melchizedeck* (see Ps. cx. 4.) exhibiting, under the sacramental bread and wine, his body broken, and his blood shed, for the life of the world. So that after the similitude of *Melchizedeck* there ariseth another priest. Now all this was foretold, because ordained to happen in the fulness of time; therefore the instituting the receiving of bread and wine, in remembrance of the sacrifice of CHRIST, as emblems of his body and blood, was no new law of CHRIST, but as really foretold in the Old Testament, as was the sacrifice and death of CHRIST upon the cross. CHRIST our passover being sacrificed for us (1 Cor. 5. 7.) there was an end of the typical ordinance of the *paschal lamb*. And the priest after the similitude of *Melchizedeck* was to bless the children of *Abraham* (Gal. iii. 7.) by exhibiting his body and blood to their faith, under the emblems of bread and wine, as *Melchizedeck* (whom some learned men suppose to be CHRIST Himself appearing to *Abraham* in an human form, as he often did under the Old Testament, in token of his future incarnation) blessed the father of all the faithful, by exhibiting



hibiting to his faith the *future great sacrifice* under those emblems which were to be the appointed figures to represent it under the gospel dispensation. Thus, (as the *Apostle* speaks, Heb. vii. 12.) as the *priesthood* was to be changed, there must be of necessity also a change\* of the law. But all this was preordained and foretold ages before it happened, and therefore is not to be looked upon as a mere law of the New Testament, but must bear equal date, in the intentions and designs of God, with the plan of redemption itself.

So with regard to the ordinance of *Baptism*, this was exhibited under the figure or type of *Noah's ark*, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water—the like figure whereunto (Ὁ ΑΥΤΙΤΥΠΟΝ—the anti-type to which) even baptism doth now save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST. 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. As the bread and wine represent the body and blood of CHRIST in the LORD'S Supper, so the water in baptism represents the cleansing of the Holy Spirit, and all exhibit to our faith, touching what is past, what the fa-

\* It appears from the whole context, that the *moral law* is not here meant, but the *typical or ceremonial law* of sacrifices, which were all to be done away on the sacrifice of the death of CHRIST.

traments of the *passover* and *circumcision* represented to the faith of the Old-Testament *saints*, touching what *was then to come*; but all meet in one grand central point—CHRIST, *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*, Rom. x. 4. Therefore the *sacraments* of the LORD's *Supper* and *baptism*, are not *new ordinances* \*, in any other sense, than as appointed of GOD to attend on the dispensation of the *gospel of His grace*, under the *New Testament*, when those sacraments were abolished which were to attend a different dispensation of the *same gospel* under the *Old Testament*. All argue one uniform, consistent design in the blessed GOD, carried on in different manifestations of it, under the *Patriarchal—Mosaic—Prophetical*, and *Evangelical* ages, but subject to no controul, opposition, or variation as to the *matter* of any single part or atom of it. The further we follow the notion of CHRIST's being the giver of a *new law*, in opposition to the law of the Old Testament, the more must we see it pregnant with consequences of the most alarming and dreadful kind—because, this being the case, we are without a *Redeemer*, and of course without any

\* See the *outward visible sign* and the *inward and spiritual grace*, in the sacrament of *baptism*, beautifully set forth, 1st. xliv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. with John iii. 5.

*redemption*; for we are told, that CHRIST died for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the FIRST TESTAMENT, Heb. ix. 15. by which FIRST TESTAMENT we must understand the law of God delivered by Moses; but I can find no trace of any satisfaction for sins committed against any new law of CHRIST: we must look to ourselves for any transgressions against this: and if so—no flesh can be saved. Therefore some of the old heretics, who were maintainers of this new-law scheme, were perfectly consistent, in declaring, that “no sin after baptism could be forgiven”—against which horrible error, the 16th Article of the Church of England is very scripturally and properly levelled.—But again—this notion of CHRIST’s abrogating the old rule of life, and enacting a new one in its place, as it turns us over to seek our salvation by a new plan of obedience, or personal righteousness of our own, makes void both Testaments. It annihilates the law which was given by Moses, it of course destroys the grace and truth which came by JESUS CHRIST. John i. 17. If we are not bound by the old moral law, we have no occasion to seek redemption from its curse, and absolution from its condemnation.—The divinity of CHRIST—the atonement of his precious blood—the imputation of His righteousness—His satisfaction—merit—variations



—*vicarious sufferings and obedience, together with his intercession at the right hand of God, and all other appendages belonging and essentially necessary to his priestly office, by which alone we can have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins, may bear as small a price in our eyes as in the eyes of Socinus, Mahomet, or Cerinthus. If the old law be abrogated as a rule of life, then have we nothing to do with—Curfed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Gal. iii. 10. The law is no longer a ministration of death, 2 Cor. iii. 7. and condemnation. And, if this be the case, the whole foundation of the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS is sapped and destroyed, and the whole fabric of man's salvation, which is built upon it, must fall into one dreadful and horrible ruin; we must reverse CHRIST's declaration—I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it—and say, that he came not to fulfil but to destroy it. Here we must join in the madness of the Antinomians, and deny the obligation of the law—or in the horrid errors of the Socinians, and renounce the hope of the gospel. To mention all the appendages to this new-law scheme would be endless; suffice it to say, that they are, in one shape or other, connected with every heresy that ever was, or can be invented; for all heresy, however*

coloured or disguised by the art and subtlety of men, or, as the *Apostle* says, Eph. iv. 14. *by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive,* must originate in the confounding those two distinct propositions, which are laid down in the beginning of *St. John's* gospel as above-mentioned—*The law was given by Moses—Grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST.*

CHRIST came, neither to set up a new law nor a new gospel, but (as the Scripture had foretold) to bear testimony to the truth of both, as revealed by *Moses and the Prophets.*—Thus he told *Pilate*, John xviii. 37. —*To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto THE TRUTH: every one that is of THE TRUTH beareth my voice.* And in that most affectionate prayer for His disciples—John xvii.—He saith, ver. 17. *Sanctify them through THY TRUTH—THY WORD IS TRUTH.*

To conclude this point:—If we compare scripture with scripture in every instance, we shall not find a single law, or rule of life, in the New Testament, which has not its foundation in the Old Testament, and that CHRIST came not as a law-giver and a judge, when He appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh—Rom. viii. 3. but as a law-fulfiller and a Saviour—I came not (said He, John xii. 47) to judge the world,

*world, but to save the world.* Not to introduce any new rule of right and wrong, which was to change the nature of moral good and evil; but for the redemption of the transgressions under the first testament, that they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. Heb. ix. 15.

As a prophet—He opened and explained the law, and preached the gospel. As a priest—He made atonement for the guilty. As king—He established the moral law as a rule of life to his subjects; leaving it as He found it—a spiritual, holy, righteous, perfect institution (Ps. xix. 7.) to which nothing could be added, from which nothing could be diminished; reaching not only to the outward actions of the life, but to the inward thoughts, tempers, desires, and intents of the heart. Were it otherwise, and the New Testament can be supposed to contain some rule of life which is not in the Old Testament, Abraham's counsel, which he advised the rich man's five brethren to follow, was very imperfect—*They have MOSES and the PROPHETS, let them hear them—If they hear not MOSES and the PROPHETS, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.* What good would Moses have done them, if the rule of life laid down by him had been incomplete and deficient?—what benefit could have accrued to them from listen-



ing, though ever so attentively, to the *prophets*, if these had no better news to tell them, than that in the reign of *Augustus Cæsar*, a man was to come and set up a *new law*? Why refer these poor *sinners* to the writings of *Moses* and the *prophets*, if there yet remained some *new rule* of *faith* and *obedience*, not to be met with in *their writings*?—Indeed, if this was the case, it was but to little purpose for CHRIST to command the *Jews* to *search the scriptures* (John v. 39.): they might, indeed, as he says, *think they had eternal life in them*, but they were sadly mistaken, if a *new law* was to be the condition of it, and the way to it, which was not revealed and contained in those scriptures. In vain also were they referred to the Hebrew scriptures, as *testifying of him*; for not a word is there to be found of his appearance upon earth as a repealer and abrogater of the *moral law* of *Moses*, and as the enacter and establisher of a *new rule of life* in its place. When our BLESSED SAVIOUR said (Matt. v. 18.) *Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, &c.* He spake in the most emphatical manner, introducing what He said with an *Amen-verity*—and though the expressions He uses have been called *proverbial*, yet no doubt but He is to be understood *literally*. The Hebrew

brew *jod*, (for doubtless he expressed himself in *Hebrew*) is the smallest letter in the *Hebrew alphabet*, yet the omission of it in some words might wholly alter the sense of them.—So with regard to the *neqada*, which we render *tittle*, it comes from *neqas*, an *horn* (Heb. *קֶרַן*) and denotes those *little projections* which in *Hebrew* distinguish one similar letter from another—as a *ד* from a *ז*—or a *ו* from a *י*. Many texts might be produced, where taking away one of these, would make a considerable alteration in the sense. Now can CHRIST be supposed to have been so watchful over the *book of the law, and all things contained therein*, as to declare that not a single letter, or the smallest part of a letter, could suffer the least diminution, and yet himself vacate, alter, change, abrogate, and repeal whole and entire statutes? And this to promulgate to mankind a *new rule of life, more excellent than that under which they had formerly lived*, hereby stamping a want of *excellence, purity, and holiness*, as well as of *wisdom and perfection*, on the Divine Law?

The *Apostle* says, Gal. iii. 21. *If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness (or that by which men could have been justified) should have been by the law, but the scripture hath concluded (conveniens, hath shut up together as in a prison) all under sin.* Again, He gives

us to understand, that the justification of man is *impossible* by the law—*What the law could not do*—τὸ ἀδύνατον τῆ νόμου—*impossible legis*—THE IMPOSSIBLE THING of the law—Why so?—Because the law itself was imperfect?—No—but *because it was weak through the flesh*. Not from any defect in the law itself, but through the impediment arising from the corruption of the human nature, which has brought us under guilt, and rendered us incapable subjects of its absolving and justifying sentence. As it argues a *perfection* and *purity* of holiness in God himself, that *He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity* (Hab. i. 13.) so it argues a *perfection* and *purity* in the *divine law*, that it cannot *justify a sinner*: and if (according to the *new-law* scheme) CHRIST has abrogated this law, and introduced one that *can*, it can only be from a *want* of perfection and *purity* in the *new law*, which is not to be found in the *old law*. This must be attended with many certain and dreadful consequences;—amongst which, one is—*making CHRIST the minister of sin*. Gal. ii. 17. — Another, representing Him as defeating the *purpose* of his own *death*; for it is a maxim self-evidently true, that *if righteousness* (or justification) *come by the law*—by any law whatsoever, no mat-  
ter



ter what—CHRIST is dead in vain. Gal. ii. 21.

The moral law, or rule of life, delivered from God by Moses, is founded in the very nature of that relation which every reasonable creature must bear to its Creator. It is all reducible to two heads, which OUR SAVIOUR holds forth as the two great commandments of the law. *Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thy self*—is too perfect a system of morals to admit of the least addition or improvement: it is a rule of life to angels as well as to men; and a constant conformity to this holy law, constitutes the happiness of the angels, principalities, and powers (Col. i. 16.) of heaven. Could one of these cease from loving God with all its faculties; could it feel a single wrong temper, either with respect to God, or to its fellow spirits, it would *sin*—it would leave its first estate, and, with the other apostate spirits, be cast down to hell, and be reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day. 2 Pet. ii. 4.

Jude 6.

It can therefore be no more true, that CHRIST came upon earth to give a new law to mortals, than that He ascended into heaven to give a new law to angels. He could

could not do either, without materially affecting the very nature of *that relation* which the intelligent and reasonable parts of the creation bear to God and each other.

As far as the *moral* law of God relates to mortals, we must consider the *commerce of the sexes*, with all its various relations, consequences, and dependencies, as a most material object of it: so material, as to form a very considerable part of the *sacred code*. It naturally ranges itself under the duties of the *second table*. So the *Apostle*, Rom. xiii. 9. *For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, &c.* and if there be any other *commandment*, it is briefly comprehended in *this saying*, namely, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour. Now if CHRIST *forbad* that which was before *allowed*, He extended the obligation of the divine law beyond what the *Old Testament* had done; therefore must be said to *add* something to the *second table of the law*. This consequence cannot be avoided, if we suppose Him giving a sense to the word *adultery*—which it never had before. He certainly hereby extended the *seventh* commandment as to its *curse and punishment*. On the other hand, if He had *allowed* what the law had *forbidden* under the *Old Testament*, He had *diminished* from its curse and punishment, by *narrowing* its obligation. In this

this view He had *diminished* from the law. In either case, we *number Him with the transgressors* in a most awful and dreadful sense; for no positive command of the law is revealed with more solemnity than Deut. iv. 2. and Deut. xii. 32. which forbid, absolutely forbid, *both*. It is therefore as impossible that CHRIST should condemn *polygamy as adultery*, as that He should allow *adultery as lawful commerce*; because the first was *adding to the law*, which never forbade it, the other *diminishing from the law*, which positively forbade *adultery with another man's wife*. Exod. xx. 14. explained Lev. xx. 10.

To suppose that GOD should ever revoke, alter, or change those *moral institutes*, which were revealed under the Old Testament for the regulation and government of mankind, is to suppose some defect in the DEITY, some want of prescience to foresee mischiefs which might arise, and which were not sufficiently guarded against. This argues an imbecillity or weakness of understanding and knowledge, like that of human *legislators*, who make laws to remedy evils as they arise before them, but cannot tell what a day may bring forth; and therefore repeal at one time, the law which they made at another. When we argue for the immutability of the law, we argue for the *perfection* of it, which



which is, in other words, to contend for the *perfection* of HIM that made it.

When GOD *created the heavens and the earth*, He gave them a law *which cannot be broken*; by this law the material universe is governed, and will be governed to the consummation of all things. The least departure from it, either by addition or diminution, would throw the whole into disorder, confusion, and ruin. So with respect to the *moral* world, the laws which GOD once gave for the regulation and government of this, are equally *sure and steadfast*; and it is owing to a departure from these, that disorder, confusion, and ruin are the portion of wretched man.

The *divine law*, as delivered from GOD by *Moses*, may be compared to a *golden chain*; the several *statutes* which compose it are the *links*. Now we know, that whichever link of a chain be broken, all that is suspended by it must fall to the ground. That the security and protection of the *weaker sex* against the deceit, violence, and cruelty of the *stronger*, depend wholly on the law of GOD, is a truth which none, who admit that GOD ever gave a law, will dispute. And shall we suppose that CHRIST came into the world to *weaken* that security, by destroying some of the *links* of the *chain* on which it is suspended? and this by introducing a *new law*,

law, so contrary to the law which was given by Moses, that men, in some situations, cannot obey the one without transgressing the other? This is making CHRIST's acts like the threatening of Rehoboam, 1 Kings xii. 11. *Whereas my father did lade you with an heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father hath chastized you with whips, but I will chastize you with scorpions.*—But far, far be it from us, to impute such a proceeding to Him who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Luke ix. 56.—That no such thing is chargeable upon Him, will appear still more plainly, on our taking a nearer and more critical view of those passages of the gospels, in which CHRIST is supposed to condemn polygamy as adultery. The first which I shall take notice of, as introductory to the rest, is Matt. v. 31, 32. *It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.* Here our LORD shews that there is but one lawful cause of divorce in the sight of GOD, so as to set the husband entirely free from the wife. The Jews, on the contrary, had been taught by the rabbies, that a man who wanted to get rid of his wife,

wife, had nothing to do but to give \* her a bill of divorcement, and this for any cause whatsoever. But CHRIST shews, that such unjust divorces had no operation on the bond of marriage; so that marrying such a divorced woman, was as much an act of adultery, as if the man had taken her while she cohabited with her husband. CHRIST did not declare this, as if it had been lawful under the Old Testament, and now made unlawful by some new law of His, but on the footing of the primary institution of marriage from the very beginning, as will appear when we farther consider the passage in Matt. xix. on which the conceit is founded, that “polygamy is forbidden by the law of CHRIST.” Suffice it to observe at present, that in this place of Matt. v. 31, 32. nothing is said about polygamy, or a man’s having two wives.

Our LORD says—*causeth her to commit adultery.* How so?—First—by laying her

\* The Jews themselves held, that there were two sorts of men who never could divorce their wives: First—those who failed in their proofs against them on the trial mentioned Deut. xxii. 13—19.—Secondly, those who had laid hold on them and lain with them, without betrothment or espousals. Deut. xxii. 29; for in both those cases it is especially said—*He may not put her away all his days.* As for us Christians, we suffer a man to take and divorce as many women as he can seduce, provided they have no other claim upon him, than what the positive law of God gives them.



under the *temptation*, which may be supposed to be not a little heightened by her resentment against her husband, who had first used her ill, and then divorced her; especially where this was done for the sake of *taking another woman whom he liked better*. Secondly—she was tempted to it by the very terms of the bill \* of divorce-ment, which was to the following effect—

\* The *bill of divorcement* was, as practised by the *Jews*, attended with so many circumstances of difficulty (as may be seen in *Selden*, *Ux. Hebr. lib. vi. c. 25. p. 514.*) that it seems to have been an invention rather to *prevent* divorces, than to promote them. However, it is very clear from our *LORD's* discourse with the *Pharisees*, *Matt. xix.* that they were not only *used*, but *abused*, to a very great degree.

It is remarkable that at *Rome*, from the foundation of the *republic* to the *first divorce*, there was a space of 520 years; though the men had a power of divorcing their wives almost at pleasure. This affords no small proof of the chastity and good behaviour of the *Roman* matrons during that period. And indeed the account we have of that *first divorce*, need not lessen them in our esteem; for *Carvilius Roga* did not divorce his wife for any fault in her, but because he had no children by her: therefore, thinking himself bound by a foolish oath, which the *Censors* at that time caused people to take, he put her away, and married another. See *Ant. Univ. Hist. vol. iii. p. 148. note W. and vol. xii. p. 216.*

In after times, the *Roman* women grew so debauched and profligate, that when *Severus* mounted the throne, he found on the roll of causes to be tried, no less than *three thousand* prosecutions for *adultery*. He had formed a scheme of reformation, which from that moment he abandoned as impossible. See *Alexander's Hist. of Wom. vol. i. 252.*

“ Such

“ Such a day, such a month, and year,  
 “ I such a one, of such a place, do,  
 “ of my own free consent and choice,  
 “ repudiate thee *A. B.* my late wife,  
 “ banish thee from me, and restore  
 “ thee to thy own liberty, and thou  
 “ mayest henceforth go whither, and  
 “ marry whom, thou wilt. And this  
 “ is thy bill of divorcement and  
 “ writing of expulsion, according to  
 “ the law of *Moses* and *Israel*. Sign-  
 “ ed by two witnesses.” See *Univ.*  
*Hist.* vol. iii. p. 149.

The people having been taught that such  
 a *bill of divorcement* was a valid dissolution  
 of the marriage; the woman of course be-  
 lieved, that she, having received it, was  
 free to *marry any other man*, as much as if  
 her husband had been dead; and thus was  
 she *caused*, by this deceit, to marry ano-  
 ther, by which, in truth, and in the sight  
 of God, she *committed adultery*.

The latter clause of ver. 32. *Whosoever*  
*shall marry her that is divorced, committeth*  
*adultery*, is wanting in the *Cambridge* ma-  
 nuscript. *St. Augustine* says, that some  
*Greek* and *Latin* copies had it not, and  
 seems to treat it as a needless tauto-  
 logy; his words are these — “ *Explica-*  
 “ *tus hic sensus putari potuit in eo quod*  
 “ *superius dictum est*” — “ *facit eam mæ-*  
 “ *chari*” — “ *quomodo enim dimissa fit*  
 “ *mæcha,*

“ *mæcha*, nisi fiat qui eam duxerit *mæ-*  
 “ *chus* ?” —that is—“ The sense of this  
 “ clause may be supposed to be explained  
 “ in what goes before—*causeth her to com-*  
 “ *mit adultery*—for how could she become  
 “ an *adulteress*, unless the man who mar-  
 “ ried her became an *adulterer* ?” But  
 when it is considered that our SAVIOUR  
 was speaking to a people *whose ears were*  
*dull of bearing*, Matt. xiii. 15—who were  
 taught by their *Doctors* to stand upon the  
 mere *letter* of scripture, without entering  
 into the *spirit* of it—it was necessary that  
*line should be upon line—line upon line—pre-*  
*cept upon precept, precept upon precept*—as  
 the *Prophet*\* speaks, Is. xxviii. 10—there-  
 fore, that our LORD should not leave them  
 to draw conclusions from words of impli-  
 cation only, and thus to throw the sin  
 upon the woman alone, because the man  
 was not mentioned, but so express Him-  
 self as to bring the whole law on the sub-  
 ject into full view ; as Lev. xx. 10. where  
 both the *woman* and the *man* are explicitly  
 mentioned, the one as an *adulteress*, the  
 other as an *adulterer*. Surely then, on the  
 authority of the scripture itself, the read-  
 ing of this last clause ought to be re-  
 tained, as it stands in the best copies.

\* So the *Apostle*, Phil. iii. 1.—*To write the same*  
*things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you*  
*it is safe.*



The next scripture to be farther considered, is Matt. xix. 9. *I say unto you, Who-soever shall put away his wife (except it be for fornication), and shall marry another, committeth adultery, and whose marieth her which is put away, committeth adultery.*—This is highly necessary, in order to bring into view the whole of OUR LORD'S design, which was to reprobate the various abuses of *divorce*, at that time practised by the *Jews*, and among the rest, the horrid traffic, which the very law of *Moses*, to which they referred for their justification, condemned—that of divorcing their wives for every cause, and, of course, that they might exchange them for a time, and then take them back again;—this was expressly forbidden by Deut. xxiv. 2, 3, 4; therefore certainly included in OUR LORD'S discourse on the subject of unlawful and unjust *divorce*. And indeed I much doubt, whether, in this place, the applying and enforcing of Deut. xxiv. 2, 3, 4. was not the chief object which OUR SAVIOUR had in view—(see before p. 85, 86, 87.) For where a man divorced his wife for such a purpose (which, according to the *Hillelites* was held lawful—see before p. 82, 83.) he became an *adulterer* in a double sense, as not only causing his own unjustly-divorced wife to commit *adultery*, by prostituting her to another man, according

according to Matt. v. 32.—but also by taking the other man's unjustly-divorced wife to himself; which seems the true import of *γαμῶσθαι ἄλλην* in this place. We must remember, that CHRIST is arguing with the *Jews* on the footing of the *law of Moses*, as it stood in the *Hebrew* scripture, not as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* interpreted it, or as we have translated it. See the learned AINSWORTH on Deut. xxiv. 1, &c. and GELL's Essay towards a New Translation, p. 723.

A person of infidel-principles was once making himself merry in a large company, at the expence of the scriptures, and told his companions, that he could prove the prophet of the Christians (as he called CHRIST) *mistaken*, even upon the most common subjects. After awakening the curiosity of the company, he thus gratified it—"CHRIST says, that *old bottles* are "not so strong as *new*" (alluding to Matt. ix. 17.) "and therefore, if *new wine* is "put into *old bottles*, it will break them "—now don't every body know that *old glass* is just as strong as *new*, for who "ever heard that *glass* was the *weaker* for "being *old*?" A *clergyman* in company, who had been made the butt of his wit, gently reprov'd the ignorance and folly of this witling, by asking him if he understood *Greek*?—"Greek, Sir?—No, Sir

“ —but what has *Greek* to do with it?—  
 “ a bottle’s a bottle, whether in *Greek* or  
 “ *English*, every body knows that, and  
 “ that an *old bottle* is just as good and as  
 “ strong as a *new one*.” —“ Not quite, Sir,”  
 (replied the other) “ if they are made of  
 “ *leather* or *skins*, which was the fact as to  
 “ the bottles CHRIST speaks of, as their  
 “ *Greek* \* name imports;—and indeed it is

\* *Ἀξος* signifies a *leathern bottle*, or *vessel*, used to hold wine. See Josh. ix. 4, 13, where the Hebrew word נִימֹן is rendered by the LXX. ἀξος. They are said to be *old* and *rent*, and *bound up*. See HARM. Obs. on Scripture, vol. i. p. 131, 132.

The celebrated *M. de Voltaire*, whose malice against the scriptures could only be equalled by his ignorance of their contents, endeavours to prove, from Prov. xxiii. 31. that the whole book is a forgery, and not written by *Solomon*; this because כִּי is rendered, in the translations before him, by the word *glass*—*vitrum*—*verre*—“ whereas,” says that wise critic, “ *drinking-glasses* were not invented till after *Solomon’s* time,” taking it for granted that כִּי must signify a *drinking-glass*; whereas it denotes any *drinking-cup* which covers or incloses the liquor, of whatever materials the said cup may consist.

He is alike happy in his proof of 1 Sam. xxviii. (which gives an account of *Saul’s* consulting the *witch of Endor*) being a forgery, “ because the word “ *Python*” (used in the *Vulgate* translation) “ was “ not known ’till the *Jews* had some acquaintance “ with the *Greeks*, after the time of *Alexander*.” —The Hebrew is נִימֹן which the LXX render by ἰγγασπίμωτον—*ventriloquam*—a kind of *wizard*, so called from their inward way of speaking or muttering. But not a glimpse of *Python* is there to be found. See *Letters of Jews to Voltaire*, vol. 2. p. 275, 373. Trans. by *Lefanu*.

“ so



“ so in many countries, even to this day,  
 “ that people use skins by way of vessels  
 “ to contain wine.”—On which side the  
 laughter of the company turned is not very  
 difficult to imagine.

—Something like this *facetious* gentleman’s  
 misconception of things is likely to be our  
 portion, if we form our ideas of the im-  
 port of certain passages of scripture, from  
 the sound of words in our *translation*,  
 without adverting to the *sense* of the *ori-  
 ginal*. So also, if we interpret the scrip-  
 ture according to our own conceits, with-  
 out duly considering the *times* when—the  
*places* where—the *occasions* on which—and  
 the *situations* of the *persons* to whom they  
 are addressed. These observations are pe-  
 culiarly needful respecting the portion of  
 scripture now before us, especially as we  
 have popular mistake, vulgar error, and of  
 course, prejudice of education, to contend  
 with. Still all these cannot alter the truth  
 of scripture, or render it at all the more  
 certain, that CHRIST here *condemns*, or  
 indeed mentions, *polygamy*.

He was surrounded at this time by a  
*great multitude* of people, who, in princi-  
 ple, as living under the law of the Old  
 Testament, were *polygamists*, and, doubt-  
 less, numbers of them were so in *practice*  
 —many there must have been among this  
 great multitude of *Jews*, who had either  
 married *two wives* together, or having *one*,

took *another* to her, and cohabited with *both*. Had our LORD intended to have condemned such practices, he would scarcely have made use of words which did not describe their situation, but of words that *did*. It is very plain that—*He that putteth away his wife, by giving her a bill of divorcement*—could have nothing to do with the man who took *two wives* together, or *one to another*, and cohabited alike with *both*. But we are apt, like the man and his *bottles*, to construe scripture, by supposing persons to whom particular things are said, were in the circumstances *then*, in which we are *now*; but it was far otherwise: they had no municipal laws against *polygamy*, as we have. So far from it, their *whole law* (as has been abundantly proved) *allowed* it.

It is to be observed, that the subject-matter in debate was the business of *divorce*, which the *Jews* had carried to a shameful height, and this is what CHRIST is opposing. The occasion of the discourse seems to be this—what He had said in His sermon on the mount, in *Galilee*, about *divorce*, Matt. v. 31, 32, had, doubtless, been carried to the *Pharisees* in *Judea*, by some of their emissaries, who were among the *multitudes that followed Him from thence*, Matt. iv. 25. most probably by some of those *spies*, which were  
set

set upon all his *words and actions*. See Luke xx. 20. The *Pharisees* were provoked, as what CHRIST had said militated against those notions which they had received, and strenuously maintained among their disciples. On His return into *the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan*, He was also attended by great *multitudes*, ver. 2. The *Pharisees* thought this a fair opportunity to *entangle Him in His talk* (as Matt. xxii. 15.) and lay Him under difficulties, either that of disavowing what He had said; or, if He persisted in it, to represent Him before the multitude as an enemy to the *law of Moses*. Therefore we read, ver. 3. The *Pharisees also came unto Him, tempting Him*—by proposing an ensnaring question, which they supposed would lay Him under one or other of the difficulties above-mentioned, either of denying what He had said, or of appearing an adversary to *Moses*. They therefore ask Him—*Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?* His answer to this is not founded on any *new law* of His own, but on the *original command of God*, delivered by *Adam*, Gen. ii. 24. The *Pharisees* then bring their design into full view, by quoting *Moses's* authority against the answer which CHRIST had given, and in defence of their own opinion. The passage which they referred to, was *Deut. xxiv. 1.* which they called a



command; but our LORD corrects them, and calls it only a *permission*, and this—for the hardness of their hearts; not that it affected the matter in the sight of God, by vacating the marriage, for that a man who married a *divorced woman*, was as guilty of *adultery* in the sight of God, as if she had not been *divorced*, and so was the *divorced woman*, who married again, *living her husband*. That this was the scope of CHRIST's reasoning upon the matter, appears from the answer which He gave to His disciples, Mark x. 10, 11, 12. when in the house, they asked Him again of the same matter—*περι τῆς ἀντὶς*—about the self-same identical thing.—He cannot be supposed to vary His opinion upon the same point; therefore, in words which had the same meaning, He repeats the substance of what He had before said to the Pharisees.—He saith unto them, *Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her; to which He adds—And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.*

As the Pharisees had referred CHRIST to the authority of Moses, by way of answer to what He had said, to prove the unlawfulness of *divorces*; He takes an opportunity to detect their abuse of that scripture, Deut. xxiv. 1. &c. (for this is the

the passage evidently referred to) and proves, on the ground of ver. 4. of that chapter, the truth of all he said upon the subject; namely, that these permissive *divorces*, which Moses suffered (*ἐπέτρεψεν*) *for the hardness of their hearts*, wrought no dissolution of the marriage-bond, but that the man who thus *injuriously divorced* his wife, *caused her* to be defiled; and he who married her, *defiled her*; but yet, having married her, she could not \* return to her *first husband*, on a *divorce* from the *second*, without a fresh act of *adultery*. *Defiling* a man's wife, and committing *adultery* upon her, are synonymous terms, as may appear by comparing *Prov. vi. 29.* with *Ezek. xviii. 11, 15.* Therefore OUR SAVIOUR says no more in effect, than is said *Deut. xxiv. 4*; He only enlarges upon, explains, and applies the doctrine there delivered, concerning the *defilement* and *adultery* which was the consequence of marrying a *divorced* woman, and has a view to the licentious practices of the *Jews*, under the sanction of

\* The instance of *David's* taking again *Michal*, *Saul's* daughter, after she had been the wife of *Phaltiel*, the son of *Laiſh*, had nothing to do with this; for she had not been put away from *David* by bill of *divorcement*, or any other act of his, but violently taken away by her father *Saul*, and given to *Phaltiel*. Nor was it, probably, in her power to have gain-sayed the imperious commands of her tyrannical father. See 1 Sam. xxv. 44. 2 Sam. iii. 13, &c.

these

these wanton and causeless divorces. The ancient Jews had learned from the Egyptians, amongst whom they had dwelt so long, a practice of changing their wives, and afterwards taking them again; which the law, Deut. xxiv. 1—4, was expressly made to prevent, as one of the greatest abominations in the sight of God. Still this practice prevailed in later times, as may be gathered from Jer. v. 8. *They were as fed horses in the morning, every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.* Their intercourse with the Greeks \* and Romans, in later times still, was another means of promoting this unnatural and horrid traffic. This could not be carried on among the Jews, without the expedient of the ספר כריתת — *bill of divorcement*; without this the adultery had been too barefaced, but with it, they had been taught by their rabbies, such as Hillel (who held that a man's seeing a woman *he liked better than his own wife, was a just cause of divorce*) to do as they pleased. They might put away their wives for every cause, therefore for this, among the rest, because they saw *another's* (for that may be signified by the word ἀλλήν, as

\* How fond and eager the Jews were to imitate the heathen fashions and manners, especially those of the Greeks, see 2 Macc. iv. 15, 16.



I shall observe presently) whom they liked better than their own. Thus under these *divorces* they could exchange\* their wives. For instance—*A.* liked the wife of *B.*—*B.* liked the wife of *A.*—each hating his own—they agree to change—How shall this be done? If the wives are exchanged without a *bill of divorce*, adultery must be acknowledged on both sides; they therefore have recourse to a *bill of divorcement*, under which the woman was held to be legally put away, according to the law of *Moses and Israel* (see before, p. 368.) and was free to marry *whom she would*; the *bill of divorcement* being looked upon as an absolute and total dissolution of the marriage-bond. Our LORD is shewing the contrary. First, On the footing of the indissolubility of the contract, in the sight of GOD, by any human authority. Secondly, On the terms of the very law, to which the *Pharisees* referred him for their justification;

\* This was so abhorred of GOD, that He made the positive law, Deut. xxiv. 1—4. not only to prohibit it, but in such terms, as to prevent the man who had divorced his wife, from ever taking her again after her *marriage with another man*, not only on a *divorce* from that man, but even *after his death*. It is a grievous thing that our *translation* has obscured the whole drift and meaning of the passage, (see before, p. 51, &c.) for by this it is, that the reader is led into the notion of CHRIST's making a *new law* against *polygamy*, while he is enforcing the *old law* against *unjust divorce*.

which

which being taken *all together*, proves no more than an implied permission of *divorce* for the *hardness of their hearts*; or, as we say—*a mensā & toro propter sceleritiam*—“from bed and board by reason of cruelty:” and this was, that women might be released from the barbarity with which their cruel husbands would have treated them, on conceiving some dislike, had they been forced to have lived with them. But yet, as *Moses* shews, the *bond of marriage* still remained; so that if a man married such a woman, he and the woman were both guilty of *adultery*, in the sight of *God*, notwithstanding the *bill of divorcement*. If this had not been the case, *Moses* could not have called the marriage of the divorced woman a *defilement*—saying, Deut. xxiv. 4.—*after she is defiled*. Our SAVIOUR, therefore, doth not by his—*I say unto you*, mean that He was enacting a *new law*, or laying down a rule that was opposite to the *law of Moses*—had He attempted this, he had fallen into the very snare which the Pharisees had laid for Him. But—“*I say unto you*” means here, as in the instances before related in His sermon upon the mount (see before, p. 331—333) as if He said—“Your *rabbies* teach you so and so, and in so teaching you they make void the law of *God* through their traditions;—but *I*, who am come to restore the honour of *Moses’s* law, by  
“ restoring

“ restoring its true sense and meaning—  
 “ I—on the authority of that law, which  
 “ you have partially quoted, without tak-  
 “ ing the whole together—say unto you,  
 “ though, for the *hardness of your hearts*,  
 “ MOSES *suffered you to put away your*  
 “ *wives*, and suspended any punishment  
 “ which might have accrued for so doing,  
 “ yet did he not, nor could he thereby  
 “ dissolve the marriage itself; so far from  
 “ it, he terms the marriage of such a di-  
 “ vorced woman a *defilement*. Therefore  
 “ I say unto you—*whosoever putteth away*  
 “ *his wife*, (*except for the cause of forni-*  
 “ *cation—which is the only legal cause of*  
 “ *divorce*) *and marrieth another*—hereby  
 “ tempting, and even provoking the di-  
 “ vorced woman to *marry another man*—  
 “ that though the *personal guilt* follows  
 “ the *personal act*, with respect to her, so  
 “ that if she, *while her husband liveth*, be  
 “ *married to another man*, *she shall be called*  
 “ *an adulteress* (see Rom. vii. 2.) yet the  
 “ guilt of this *adultery* will also be im-  
 “ puted to him who was the wilful  
 “ occasion of it, by *causing her to commit*  
 “ *it*. And as to you, who, for the pur-  
 “ pose of *exchanging your wives with each*  
 “ *other* (a matter which the law of *Moses*,  
 “ in a part of the passage which you refer  
 “ me to, but which you don't mention,  
 “ was



“ was particularly made to guard against \*)  
 “ —and to you who marry such divorced  
 “ women—and to you divorced women,  
 “ who think yourselves at liberty to  
 “ marry whom ye will, when ye are  
 “ unjustly put away from your husbands  
 “ —*Moses* calls all this *defilement*, which  
 “ is but another term for *adultery*:—there-  
 “ fore *I say unto you*, as well to those  
 “ who, contrary to the law above-men-  
 “ tioned, *take back again* the women they  
 “ have *once divorced*†, after they have been  
 “ married

\* For this, saith *Abarbinel* on Deut. xxiv. 4. was to imitate the *Egyptians*, who changed their wives, and took them again into their houses, which was the occasion of great filthiness; for, as *Isaac Arama* glosses, if this had not been prohibited, a gate had been opened unto vile men to make a trade of *changing* their wives, and thereby filled the land with *whoredoms*.—See *Patr.* on Deut. xxiv. 4.

† Though the bill of divorcement wrought as a sort of divorce *a mensa & toro*, and as a release from the *vinculum externum*, or *outward bond*—yet nothing but *adultery* or *death* could dissolve the *vinculum internum*, which was created by the special command of God—they *shall be one flesh*. Therefore, when a divorced woman went away from her husband, and married another man, she committed an act of *adultery* in the eye of God: but this dissolved the *first contract*, and made her the wife of the *second* man; therefore, if this man put her away, the first husband, of whom she had been the *ἀπολελυμένη*, (see Luke xvi. 18.) could not take her again without committing *adultery*;—for after her departure from him, she had become, by her act of adultery, another

married to others—however ye may  
 have been taught to abuse the toler-  
 ation of divorce on particular occasions  
 —that all the cases which I have men-  
 tioned, touching men divorcing their  
 wives and marrying others, thereby  
 causing their unjustly divorced wives to  
 marry other men—of men marrying di-  
 vorced women—and divorced women  
 marrying other men—this is all con-  
 trary to the law of marriage itself, as  
 delivered to and pronounced by ADAM,  
 Gen. ii. 24. as well as to the law of the  
 seventh commandment, delivered to Moses,  
 and by him delivered to the people at  
 Mount Sinai. In short, these are only  
 several methods of incurring the guilt  
 of adultery; therefore all the *salvos*  
 which your consciences may derive  
 from your abuse of Moses's permission,  
 with respect to bills of divorcement, how-  
 ever highly esteemed amongst men, are abo-  
 mination in the sight of GOD. Luke xvii.  
 15.—Here CHRIST puts the Pharisees  
 to silence, by the very law which they  
 had partially quoted, with the hope of en-  
 snaring Him, and making Him appear as  
 an enemy to the law of Moses. We do  
 not read of any reply which they attempt-  
 ed to make: this would certainly not  
 be their man's property. The law therefore of Deut.  
 xxiv. 1, &c. was especially made to prevent such  
 abominable traffic.—See the preceding note.

“ have

have been the case, had they understood him to have spoken against *polygamy*; the *Pharisees* could have desired nothing more to their purpose, of representing Him as an enemy to *Moses*, as there was not a single passage in the whole *law* of *Moses* to have supported Him against them on that point. It is therefore plain that they understood Him in no such sense. Neither did His own disciples understand Him to speak of any thing but *divorce*.—They are said, Mark x. 10, *in the house to ask Him again of the same matter*; His answer was in substance the same: the conclusion which the disciples draw from it is—*If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry*—i. e. “If a man cannot get rid of his wife when he pleases, he had better not marry at all.” This conclusion must have been made from their understanding CHRIST to speak of *divorce*, for it is totally foreign from the matter of *polygamy*;—How could they possibly mean that a man had better have *no wife at all*, if he could not have more than *one at once*? It must likewise be supposed, that they did not misunderstand their *Master*, for if they had, He would doubtless have set them right in his reply (Matt. xix. 11, 12) and not have there said, what clearly shews them to have understood Him aright.

Now



Now let us consider Matt. xix. 9. still more closely, taking it in connection with his subsequent explanation of it *to the disciples in the house*. Mark x. 10, 11, 12.

I say unto you—*Whosoever shall put away his wife—καὶ γαμήσῃ ἄλλην—and shall marry another; ἄλλην* must here agree with the antecedent *γυναῖκα*, which we render by the word *wife*—therefore *γυναῖκα* must be understood as following the word *ἄλλην*, and this may be construed in the sense of *ἁλλοτριαν γυναῖκα*—*another man's wife*, i. e. *a divorced woman*. We find the word *ἄλλης*, so used, 1 Cor. x. 29. ὑπο ἄλλης συνειδήσεως—which we rightly translate—*another man's conscience*. The learned *Wetstein* takes *ἄλλην* in this sense in his note on Matt. xix. 9.—His words are—*Ἀλλην]* i. e. *Ἀλλοτριαν* ab alio itidem viro repudiatam—vel ab illo divertentem, ut *Herodias* \* & *Salome*.

\* *Salome* was sister to *Herod the Great*. She is said to have been the first woman who repudiated her husband. *Herodias* left her husband *Philip*, and married the said *Philip's* brother, *Herod Antipas*; for which *John the Baptist* severely reprov'd him, saying—it is not lawful for thee to have her. Matt. xiv. 4. For saying this, he had a double authority. First, as to the incest, Lev. xviii. 16. Secondly, with regard to her being *another man's wife*, Lev. xx. 10. *Herod's* situation was just what our Lord condemns in the passage of Mark x. 11, 12. He had put away his first wife, who was the daughter of *Aretas*, king of *Arabia*, that he might take his brother *Philip's* wife, with whom he had fallen in love; and he did this at the

*Salome*.—"Another] that is—another man's  
 " wife, who has been repudiated by him,  
 " or who has left her husband; as did He-  
 " rodias and Salome." He mentions after-  
 wards a difficulty he was under from this  
 interpretation of ἀλλην—as it seems to make  
 the text say the same thing twice over;  
 and on ἐπ' αὐτην, Mark x. 11. he has  
 the following note, which I will lay before  
 the reader in *English*, referring the learn-  
 ed to the original.—*Against her.*] "There  
 " are some who interpret this to relate to  
 " the second or latter wife, on whom the

request of *Herodias* herself. This was putting away  
 his wife, and marrying ἀλλην, i. e. ἀλλοτριαν, another's,  
 which was adultery; as was *Herodias's* leaving her  
 husband, and marrying *Herod*. All this (except the  
 incest) fell directly under the condemnation of the di-  
 vine law, as explained by CHRIST to the disciples, and  
 doubtless was meant by what he said before, in the  
 presence of the multitude, to the Pharisees; and  
 may serve as a proper illustration of the doctrine of  
 the divine law, as set forth by our LORD, with respect  
 to unlawful divorces, taking ἀλλην in the sense of  
 ἀλλοτριαν.

See also the case of *Drusilla*, a daughter of *He-  
 rod Agrippa*, who forsook *Azizus* king of *Emesa*, and  
 married *Felix*—(see *Acts* xxiv. 24.) also of her two  
 sisters.—*Berenice*, the eldest, left her husband *Polemon*,  
 king of *Pontus*, to go to others—and *Mariamne*, the  
 youngest, was married to *Archelaus*, and forsook him  
 to marry *Demetrius*, an *Alexandrian Jew*. *Ant. Univ.*  
*Hist.* vol. x. p. 643, and note E.

The above-mentioned women were of high rank  
 and dignity; but doubtless others practised the same,  
 who were of too low a degree to be subjects of the  
 historian's pen.

" husband

“ husband might commit *adultery*, pro-  
 “ perly so called ; which he cannot be  
 “ said to commit if he should marry a *vir-*  
 “ *gin* or a *widow*, but only by marrying a  
 “ woman who had been in like manner  
 “ (*i. e.* unjustly) divorced by another  
 “ man. But there is an objection to this  
 “ interpretation, which is, that by this  
 “ method of interpreting the passage, the  
 “ same thing would be said *twice over*,  
 “ once at this ver. 11, and again at ver.  
 “ 12.”

Here I cannot help dissenting from this  
 learned and judicious man ; for surely a  
 man's *putting away his wife*, and marrying  
 another *divorced woman*, and a *woman's put-*  
*ting away her husband, and marrying another*  
*man*, are very different ideas. In both cases  
 adultery is committed, whether the woman  
 be unjustly put away from her husband,  
 or she put herself away ; but when we  
 consider, as in the case of *Herodias* and *Sal-*  
*ome*, that this last was growing into a  
 custom—for *Salome's* example was soon fol-  
 lowed by others, as *Josephus* \* writes—it  
 was natural for CHRIST to condemn this  
 in as *express terms* in one case as in the  
 other, *both* being equally opposite to the  
 law of God.

\* See Ant. Universal History, vol. 3. p. 149. at  
 the bottom of the note.



The *Jews* at this time had much intercourse with the *Romans*, *Judea* having been long reduced to the situation of a *Roman* province, and no doubt, in the very corrupt state in which the *Jews* universally were, the *Roman* manners easily insinuated themselves amongst the *Jewish* women. See before, p. 385. n. *Divorces*, tho' allowed very early in *Rome*, were never put in practice till about the year of *Rome* 520, which was before *CHRIST* 229 years, in the case of *Carvilius Ruga*, who divorced his wife because she was barren; after which they became scandalously frequent, as a corruption of manners prevailed in the *republic*, till the *Roman* women grew as licentious in leaving their husbands, as the husbands were in putting them away.—What was the character of the *Roman* ladies in this respect, we may learn from *Juvenal*\*, who wrote not many years after this time. In *Sat. vi.* he is dissuading his friend *Ursidius Posthumus* from marriage, by setting before him the monstrous practices of the *Roman* women, one of which was, leaving their husbands, and marrying other men.

Speaking

\* So from *Seneca*, who says—"Who is now  
 " ashamed of breaking the nuptial union, when so  
 " many ladies of eminence and quality reckon their  
 " years not by the number of *consuls*, but of *hus-*  
 " bands ;

Speaking of their *imperiousness*, he says, their grand argument, in all disputes with their husbands, was

t Hoc volo—sic jubeo, fit pro ratione voluntas.  
Imperat ergo viro:— l. 222.

Then he proceeds—

————— Sed mox hæc regna relinquit  
\* Permutatque domos, & flamma conterit. Inde  
Avolat, & spreti repetit vestigia lecti.  
Ornatos paulo ante fores, pendentia linquit  
Vela domus, & adhuc virides in limine ramos.  
Sic crescit numerus, sic fiunt octo mariti  
Quinque per autumnos; titulo res digna sepulchri.

“ So will I have it—so command I still,  
“ And yield no reason but my sov’reign will.”  
Then the imperious wanton leaves her spouse,  
From man to man she flies, from house to house,  
Forgetful of her bride’s attire, and bridal vows. }  
Again † she seeks her first-deserted man,  
And, in five years, eight husbands crown her plan.—  
Pity, but such achievements should be known,  
Engrav’d on brass or monumental stone !

That

“ bands; and are divorced in hopes of marrying, and  
“ marry in hopes of being divorced?” De Benef.  
Lib. iii. c. 6.

Puffendorf observes, Lib. vi. c. i. § 15. that the borrowing and lending of wives among the Romans, is a practice much talked of by authors.

\* *Permutatque domos*] Ab uno viro ad alium aliumque transiens.—Going from one husband to another and another. Lud. Prateus.

† This line proves that they did not wait for their husbands’ death to marry others, as does the next:

That this was a common practice, appears from l. 45, &c.

Quid quod & antiquis uxor de moribus illi  
Quæritur? O medici! mediam pertundite venam!  
Delicias hominis! Tarpeium limen adora  
Pronus, & auratam Junoni cæde Juveneam;  
Si tibi contigerit capitis matrona pudici,

What shall I say to him who seeks a wife  
Of ancient manners, uncorrupt of life?  
Surely he's mad—come, Doctor, breathe a vein,  
And try to bring him to himself again.  
But if, by chance, a woman could be found  
Modest and chaste, through all the empire round,  
Thrice happy mortal!—to thy destin'd bed  
Let her, with thanks to all the Gods, be led.

In short, such was the profligacy of  
the *Roman* women, that if one could be

for they can hardly be supposed to bury seven husbands in *five* years.

*Ovid*, who lived a little earlier than *Juvenal*, censures the man who makes a scruple of his wife's going to others, as unacquainted with true politeness,

*Rusticus est nimium quem lædit adultera conjux,  
Et NOTOS MORES non satis urbis habet.*

He that won't lend his wife's an awkward clown,  
Unskill'd in the *known-fashion* of the town.

*Martial*, cotemporary with *Juvenal*, has an *epigram* which shews the liberties which were taken by a Roman lady.

*Mæchum GELLIA non habet nisi unum,  
Turpe est hoc magis, uxor est duorum.*

One spark serves honest *Gellia* at a time,  
But her *two husbands* are a fouler crime.

found



found fit for his friend to marry, he would call her a *Phœnix* as we say :

*Rara avis in terris nigroque simillima cygno.*

But to return to *Wetstein*.—“ Others understand this *ἐν αὐτῇ* of the first wife, to whom the husband might by his unjust divorce give occasion of committing adultery, or of flying to a second or adulterous marriage : but These do not explain what those words—and shall marry another—are to the purpose ; since the divorced woman would be equally in danger of committing adultery, whether the husband who put her away, marries another or not. This difficulty came into my mind at *Matt. xix. 9* ; but on considering the matter again, I do not think those words superfluous, but so to cohere with the rest of the sentence, as to denote, that though the unjust divorce was the occasion of the divorced wife’s adultery, yet the husband’s second marriage was the occasion of the divorce. For example—If a man, having met with another woman who pleased him better than his wife, should, in order to enjoy the other, give his wife a bill of divorcement, and grant her liberty to marry any body else, whom she chose, would this be any thing else than to

“ expose her to an *adulterer*, and to com-  
 “ mit the crime of *pimping* ?” So the  
*Roman* laws—“ To act the part of a *pimp*,  
 “ is not less a crime than to make a gain  
 “ by prostituting the body. — He who  
 “ makes a gain of the *adultery* of his wife,  
 “ whatever his rank or condition be,  
 “ is punished as an *adulterer*.—If a man,  
 “ in order to defame his wife, shall put  
 “ an *adulterer* in his place, both the hus-  
 “ band and wife shall, by law, be ad-  
 “ judged guilty of the crime of *adultery*.”

By all this it appears, that nothing kept  
 this learned man from thinking, with those  
 first mentioned, that the ἐπ' αὐτῆς relates  
 to the *second* wife, who, to make the man  
 guilty of adultery, must be a *divorced* wo-  
 man, but his supposing, that in this view  
 the same matter is repeated *twice over*.  
 This makes him also, on *second thoughts*,  
 differ from his own note on *Matt. xix. 9.*  
 and take the μοιχαλαί, *Mark x. 11.* in the  
 sense of the *Hebrew* \* *Hiphil* conjugation,  
 as

\* “ *Mœchatur*] *i. e.* *Mœchari* facit illam, nempe  
 “ priorem a se missam. ex collat. *Matt. v. 32.* Facere  
 “ rectè dicitur qui facto causam præbet. Et mos  
 “ est *Hellenistarum* verba formæ *Hiphil* per activa ex-  
 “ primere, ut *Rom. viii. 26.* *Gal. iv. 6.* *Pole Synop.*  
 “ in *Matt. xix. 9.*”

“ *Committeth adultery*] that is, maketh her to  
 “ commit adultery, to wit, the former wife which  
 “ he sent away from him; comp. *Matt. v. 32.* He  
 “ is

as *causing her to commit adultery*, and so the husband, by *causing her to do it*, is *particeps criminis*, as an accessory before the fact, and may be said himself to *commit it*; as a man who hires, or causes another to commit a murder, is himself guilty of murder; as *David*, 2 Sam. xii. 9. *Ahab*, 1 Kings xxi. 19.

This interpretation is not new; for *Wetstein*, on Matt. xix. 9, mentions some copies, in which for *μοιχатаι*—*committeth adultery*, is red — *ποiei αυτην μοιχευθηναι*—*causeth her to commit adultery*; and in one — *μοιχатаι*—*τστ' εστιν αναγκαζει μοιχευθηναι*—*committeth adultery*; that is, *compels her to commit adultery*. I will conclude this point with observing, that, in all this, there is not the least hint or glance at *polygamy*, as *condemned*, or even *mentioned*, in these texts.

The learned *Grotius*, whom I have mentioned and quoted, at the beginning of

“is rightly said to do it, who occasions it to be done. It is the custom of the *Hellenists*” (*Jews, who spake or wrote in Greek*) “to express words of the form *Hiphil* by active verbs.” As Rom. viii. 26. where the SPIRIT’S *making intercession for us*, is his causing us to pray in a right manner for ourselves; just as His crying *Abba, Father*, (Gal. iv. 6.) is His enabling us so to cry. Accordingly the apostle, Rom. viii. 15, speaks of Him as the *Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father*. See *Guyse Paraph.* on Rom. viii. 26. and note,



this chapter, as maintaining a *new law* of CHRIST on the subject of *polygamy*, “ afterwards changed his opinion,” (see note “, on Grot. de Jure, lib. ii. c. 5. § 9.) “ as is plain from his annotations “ on Matt. v. 32. where he shews, that “ in that place, and *other like passages* “ of the gospels, *polygamy* is not condemned, but only the abuse of *divorce*, “ from whatever cause it proceeds.” “ Hence (adds Gronovius) in that excellent “ little work—*De Verit. Relig. Christ.*— “ he only says—“ The *Christians* follow “ the usage of the \* *Germans* and *Romans*, “ who were content with *one wife*. Lib. ii. “ § 13; and in the note there introduced,

\* *Grotius*, in the passage here alluded to, doth not quote *Tacitus* fairly, whose words are—“ *Severa illis matrimonia. Nam soli prope barbarorum singulis uxoribus contenti, exceptis admodum paucis, qui non libidine, sed ob nobilitatem, pluribus ambiuntur nuptiis.*” Which proves, that the *Germans* were, in a degree at least, *polygamists*. As to the *Romans*, they were also *polygamists*; for though they lived but with *one*, who was called *uxor*, a *wife*; yet their *liberta*, and *ancilla* or *serva*, with whom they also cohabited, amounted to the same in point of fact.

*Suet. in Vit. J. Caf.* saith—that “ he made a law, “ by which every man, for the sake of propagating “ children, might marry as many wives as he pleased.” *M. Antony* had two wives at the same time. So had *Crassus*, and doubtless many more, whose names have not reached us.

“ he

“ he only refers to 1 Cor. vii. 4.” This text, with the verses preceding it, we have very fully considered in the *last chapter*.

To all the weight of evidence which has been produced against the notion of CHRIST'S introducing a *new law*, either with respect to *polygamy*, or any thing else, I will add one more testimony, and such a one as must carry its own conviction with it, even into the bosom of prejudice itself. Let us hear our LORD *Himself*, Luke xvi. 18. *Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, (\*ἑτεραν) committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that has been put away (ἀπολελυμένην) from her husband, committeth adultery.* This, say some, is CHRIST'S “ *new law*, by which He forbade *bad polygamy*, which was allowed under the Old Testament.”—As to the meaning of the words themselves, as they are much the same as in Matt. xix. 9. I will not repeat what has already been observed on that place; but as to their constituting some *new law*, we have CHRIST'S

\* The ἑτεραν here must, like the ἄλλην, Matt. xix. 9. and Mark x. 11. have reference to the γυναίκα mentioned before, and of course signify a *married*, i. e. a *divorced*, woman. The marrying a *maid* or a *widow* could not be *adultery*, even under the circumstance here mentioned, because there was no law of GOD to make it so—for where *there is no law, there is no transgression*. Rom. iv. 15.

OWN

own authority to say they *do not*: for observe the preface at ver. 17. with which our LORD introduces them, wherein *He Himself* gives us to understand, that, what He *here* says, and of course what He says *elsewhere* to the same purpose, is grounded upon *the law of the Old Testament*. It is *easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail*. Having introduced what He says, ver. 18. with this positive assertion touching the stability, unchangeableness, and perpetual obligation of *the law*, we must, to be consistent ourselves, or to make Him consistent, construe what He says, as grounded upon *that law*, which *He Himself* lays down as the foundation on which He spake. This can be no other than the *law of GOD* as delivered by *Moses*; what that *condemned*, CHRIST *condemned* on its authority; but had He *condemned* what that *allowed*, or had He *allowed* what that *condemned*, there was an end of that law, and more than a *tittle* of it must be said to *fail*—πεσείν—to *fall*—*perish*, and *be destroyed*. It may be worth our while to take a short view of the context:—ver. 16. *the law and the prophets were until John: since that time, the kingdom of GOD is preached, and every man presseth into it*.

As if our LORD had said: “Till the  
“coming of *John the Baptist*, which was  
“foretold,



“ foretold, If. xl. 3. Mal. iii. 1. ye were  
 “ under the teachings of the *legal* and  
 “ *prophetical* dispensation; but since *John's*  
 “ coming, that *gospel*, which was prefigured by the ceremonial and typical  
 “ rites of the *Mosaic* dispensation, and  
 “ foretold for ages together by the prophets, is now openly declared. This  
 “ is not confined, as the others were, to  
 “ the *Jews* only; but multitudes of persons, of what nation or character soever,  
 “ even publicans and sinners of the *Gentiles*, sensible of their sin and misery,  
 “ shall be invited to partake of its blessings, and will eagerly *press* for an interest in them, though they be no observers of the rites and ceremonies of  
 “ the *law*.

“ And yet the law is not hereby made  
 “ void;—the prophecies, types, and shadows of the Old Testament, are fully  
 “ accomplished; the *moral* law is honoured and confirmed, its precepts explained, and all its commandments established as a law of my kingdom, as  
 “ an eternal and unchangeable *rule of life*  
 “ to all my subjects. Therefore *think not*  
 “ *that I came to destroy the law* (*καταλυσαι*,  
 “ Matt. v. 17.) to *dissolve* it, or loosen  
 “ men from any of its obligations in  
 “ point of obedience—*It is easier for*  
 “ *heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle*  
 “ of

“ of the law to fail—therefore, however  
 “ you may have been taught to make it  
 “ void by your traditions, and especially  
 “ with regard to your treatment of your  
 “ wives, by which you are daily violating  
 “ the law of marriage, in the unjust and  
 “ scandalous divorcements, which your  
 “ rabbies have taught you to abuse to the  
 “ purposes of licentiousness and cruelty,  
 “ yet the law of God *changeth not*, it is  
 “ the same now as in the days of Adam;  
 “ and therefore—whoever puts away his  
 “ wife unjustly, breaks the law which  
 “ commands him to cleave to her, and  
 “ puts asunder what God hath joined to-  
 “ gether—and if this be done in order to  
 “ marry one you like better, and under  
 “ such circumstances of provocation, as  
 “ force the wife you put away to marry  
 “ another man, she certainly sins against  
 “ the seventh commandment, as does the  
 “ man who takes her; but yet the guilt  
 “ of adultery is not confined to them,  
 “ but lights upon you also, who, by your  
 “ unlawful treatment of your wife, in  
 “ putting her away unjustly, caused her  
 “ to commit it (see Matt. v. 32.) You  
 “ are therefore answerable before God  
 “ as an adulterer; for there is no differ-  
 “ ence, in the eye of His law, between  
 “ the perpetrator of a crime, and the in-  
 “ stigator and promoter of it.

In

In the above paraphrase on the context, I have endeavoured to take in the whole sense of the passages where this subject is mentioned, as agreeable to, and reconcilable with, the law of the Old Testament; for it was certainly by *this*, that our LORD regulated all His *thoughts, words, and actions*, on every subject, and upon every occasion, as well as in the instance of what He said, Luke xvi. 18.

Had CHRIST been to have introduced a *new law*, it must have appeared somewhere in His *\* commission*: we have several

\* In Deut. xviii. 18, 19. it is said—I will raise them up a PROPHET from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put MY WORDS in His mouth, and He shall speak unto them ALL THAT I SHALL COMMAND HIM. And it shall come to pass, that whoever will not hearken unto MY WORDS, which He shall speak in MY NAME, I will require it of him. And, ver. 15. The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a PROPHET in the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken. This general account of CHRIST's mission as a Prophet, seems to militate against every idea of His setting up a *new law* of His own. Had He done this, He had not been like Moses, who received the law from God, and delivered it to the people, but like Mahomet, who invented a *new law* of His own, in opposition to the law of God, and imposed it upon his followers as containing the only true religion and worship: whereas the blessed JESUS gave this test of His mission, John iii. 34. He whom GOD hath sent, speaketh the words of GOD—for the truth of this, His constant appeal was to the writings of the Old Testament, and no doubt had the above passages of Deuteronomy in his view.



transcripts of this, relative to all His offices, but not a single clause is there in any of them to that purpose.

His commission as a *priest* appears in several parts of the Old Testament, and is thus shortly summed up, Dan. ix. 24.—*To finish the transgression—to make an end of sins—to make reconciliation for iniquity and (thus) to bring in everlasting righteousness.*—As a *prophet*, says he, by II. lxi. 1. &c. *The spirit of the LORD GOD is upon me, because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our GOD; to comfort all that mourn: to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.* There is nothing about a new law in this part of OUR SAVIOUR'S commission.

As to His *kingly office*, on which He entered after His resurrection from the dead, when He had a name given Him above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth,

*earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of God the Father—His kingdom was to be administered not by any new law, but by that which was from the beginning, once written on tables of stone, but now to be written on the fleshy tables of the heart, 2 Cor. iii. 3. For thus saith the LORD—This is the covenant that I will make with the house of ISRAEL; after those days I will put MY LAW in their inward parts, and write IT in their hearts, and will be their GOD, and they shall be my people. Jer. xxxi. 33. Comp. Heb. viii. 10.*

If CHRIST then gave a *new law*, or *rule of life*, He exceeded His commission, and we must call in question His veracity, as well as his sincerity, in that declaration of His, Matt. v. 17, 18, 19. likewise as to what he says, John xii. 49. *I have not spoken of MYSELF, but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say\*, and what I should speak.*

But

\* If the Father gave CHRIST a commandment to declare that to be a mortal sin against the seventh commandment, which was uniformly allowed as innocent under the Old Testament, this must infer either a change in the divine mind and will, or an absolute contradiction: this last is usually got rid of, as the Mahometan doctors get rid of the contradictions in the Koran—by their doctrine of *abrogation*:—for they

But to return once more to OUR SAVIOUR'S discourse with the *Pharisees*:—Can it be imagined that CHRIST, so remarkable for his precision, so thoroughly accurate in all he said on every other point, should use so little in this, as not to make Himself understood by His hearers? Nay—that he should observe so little precision, as not to *describe* an offence, which we are to suppose Him to condemn? The most flagrant instances, the most obvious and palpable definitions of *polygamy* cannot be understood from what He says.—*He that putteth away his wife, † by bill of divorcement, and marrieth another*—does not describe *a man's taking two wives together, and cohabiting with both*; nor—a man's *having a wife, and taking another* to her, and cohabiting with *both*. Such was the Old Testament *polygamy*, not the *putting away one* in order to *take another*.—I do not recollect a single instance in which this was ever done during the whole administration of *Moses*, the *Judges*, or *Kings*, any more than

pretend that “ God commanded several things in the “ *Koran*, which, for good reasons, were afterwards “ *revoked and abrogated*.” Thus do some of our *Christian* Doctors treat the Old Testament, in order to establish certain doctrines which they suppose to be taught in the New Testament respecting marriage.

† This is the sense of the word *ἀπολῦσαι*. Matt. xix. 7, 8, 9.



a single instance where *polygamy* was forbidden\*. However the law of *Moses* forbade what our SAVIOUR mentions, just as much as His words do. If a man once took a woman, he never (except for adultery) could *put her away all his days*; and though *Moses* suffered, in order to avoid worse consequences, *divorces*, by not bringing the offenders to condign punishment in every instance, yet there never was an instance when the law of God did not condemn them. As for *polygamy*, *Josephus* says, and the Bible proves what he says to be true, that—"It was the custom of the *Jews* to live with a plurality of wives; he calls it *πατριον*—the custom of their country derived from their fathers."—The same historian, writing the account of God's giving the deceased *Saul's* wives to *David*, observes, that, "God gave *David* many wives, which he might *justly* and *lawfully* have." The *Peshîta*, on Lev. xviii. calls it, "*notissimum*"—a thing most *notorious*, "that He who said it was forbidden to have *more wives than one*, was entirely ignorant of the law." See Grot. de Jure, lib. ii. c. 5. § 9. in the note k.

Is it then, without the highest absurdity, to be imagined, that CHRIST should mention

\* Unless we understand Lev. xxi. 13, 14. to forbid it in the case of the *high-priest*, as the *Jews* commonly understood it.

and condemn *polygamy* in the presence of such multitudes of *Jews*, and in a settled dispute with His bitterest foes, the *Pharisees*, who only disputed with Him to ensnare Him, and to have whereof to accuse Him to the people as an enemy to *Moses* (for this was their grand point in their appeal to *Moses's* writings) and yet that we should not meet with a syllable of reply to what He advanced, when they might have quoted the whole Old Testament against Him? that He should declare a thing to be *adultery*, without a single testimony from *Moses* to support Him in what he said? and this, when He never on any other occasion taught any doctrine but on the authority of the Old Testament, and constantly appealed to it for the truth of what He declared? Lastly. Is it conceivable, as CHRIST must be supposed to speak in *Hebrew*, that He should give a meaning to the language of the Old Testament, which, in all the writings of *Moses* and all the *prophets*, it never had? Now, wherever the verb *μοιχεύωμαι* is used in the *Greek* translation of the LXX, it constantly answers to the *Hebrew* *הִנֵּחַ*; and therefore there is no room to doubt, that wherever, in our SAVIOUR'S discourses, as recorded by the *Evangelists*, we meet with the word *μοιχεύωμαι*, *הִנֵּחַ* was the very *Hebrew* term used by him: but no where, throughout the whole *Hebrew* Bible, is this word applied to a man's *mar-  
rying*

rying a second wife, living his first, unless such second was either betrothed or married to another, or to any thing else, than only to the defilement of a betrothed or married \* woman. This is its single idea throughout the whole. Therefore it is figuratively used to describe the people's forsaking God, and turning to idols. See before, p. 57.

CHRIST said to the Jews, John v. 46, 47. *Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?* It is not easy to conceive words more forcible than these, to express an absolute and unreserved appeal to the Old Testament for the truth of all CHRIST said and taught in His prophetic character. In this character He stood before the great multitudes of the people and the Pharisees, while he was delivering, on the authority of the scriptures, the sense of those scriptures upon the matter of unjust divorce, and proving the criminal consequences of it to all parties concerned. He so proved His point, that His adversaries had not a word to reply. He silenced them as He did the

\* Let any one take up an *English* concordance, and look at the word *adultery*, and he will not be able to find a single instance where it is applied to *polygamy* in any part of the Old Testament, nor in any other manner than the Hebrew נאִן.



devil, Matt. iv. 10, 11. by the word of God. But had He said *polygamy* was *sinful*, from which of *Moses's* writings would He have proved this? The *Pharisees* might have retorted upon Him His own declaration and appeal to the writings of *Moses*; they might have said—"Thou hast said, that if we *believed the writings of Moses*, we *should believe Thy words*—Thou hast said, that if *a man having a wife, marrieth another*" (for thus they might have put it, had they understood Him to have condemned *polygamy*) "he *committeth adultery*; but where dost Thou find this in *Moses's* writings? they are filled with the *allowance* of what Thou *condemnest*, without a single exception: therefore, because we believe *Moses's* writings, we do *not* believe *Thee*."

From all that has been said, I do conclude, that CHRIST was not a destroyer of the *old law*, nor a giver of a *new one*—that therefore the business of *polygamy*, and all other points relative to the *commerce of the sexes*, were fully adjusted and settled by the *divine law*, subject to no alteration or change whatsoever, by \* any power

\* ZUINGLIUS, in his letter on the subject of King HENRY's divorce, says very truly—that "the *apostles* had made no *new laws* about marriage, but had left it as they found it." See BURNET, *Hist. Ref.* vol. i. p. 93.

in EARTH OR HEAVEN. For thus saith the SPIRIT—Ecclef. iii. 14. *Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever, nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it.*

Having now finished what I had to say on the subject of this *chapter*, I shall next proceed, on the footing of the *divine law*, to consider another material point relative to the *commerce of the sexes*, which is *Divorce*.

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#### APPENDIX TO CHAP. II.

THE celebrated *Martinus Bucerus*, in *enarrationibus ad cap. 19. Libri Judicium*, has left us the following observation concerning *concubinage*; which, as it tends to throw some light on the subject, would have been inserted in its proper place, (see before, p. 53, 54.) had I met with it time enough. It has since come to me by the hand of a friend; and as it is well worth inserting, as the testimony of one of our excellent and learned *reformers*, I hope the reader will not be displeased at my giving it a place by itself.

“ *Concubinæ erant legitimæ etiam uxores ;*  
 “ *sed hoc a matronis differebant, quod sine*  
 “ *dote & sine solenni sanctificatione reci-*  
 “ *piebantur :*

36 prebantur: & erant fere ex ancillis, &  
 37 servilis conditionis: & non erant adju-  
 38 toria illius præstantioris gradus, ut om-  
 39 ni rerum communione gauderent sed  
 40 humilliore gradu, & quæ haberentur hu-  
 41 miliore loco, quod ad administrationem  
 42 domus attinet, & ad filiorum successio-  
 43 nem.—Legitimum verò genus concubi-  
 44 narum est, quum habentur conjunctæ  
 45 copula matrimoniali, ne abjici temere  
 46 possint: tametsi non habeant commu-  
 47 nionem plenam omnium rerum cum  
 48 marito, ut matres-familias: nec con-  
 49 venerunt pactis dotalibus, unde & nati  
 50 ex illis non habent successionem in hæ-  
 51 reditate paternâ cum natis ex matre-  
 52 familias: sicut *Abraham* ex concubinis  
 53 *veris uxoribus*, sed non matribus-fami-  
 54 lias, dona quædam deputavit, portionem  
 55 hæreditatis nullam addixit.—Ex legitimo  
 56 genere concubinarum fuerunt concubinæ  
 57 sanctorum patrûm. Et quia DOMINUS  
 58 dignitates & patrimonia, quæ suis con-  
 59 tulit, conservari vult, optandum om-  
 60 ninò ut hoc genus uxorum, uti apud  
 61 sanctissimos olim Patres observatum est,  
 62 rursus apud Christianos, & maximè in  
 63 præstantibus familiis observaretur, &c.”  
 64 “*Concubines were also lawful wives;*  
 65 “but in this they differed from the *ma-*  
 66 “*trons*, that they were received without  
 67 “dowry and a solemn sanctification. They  
 68 “were



“ were usually from maid-servants, and  
 “ of a servile condition; and they were  
 “ not *help-mates* of that superior degree,  
 “ as to enjoy a communion of things in  
 “ every respect, but in a lower degree,  
 “ and were reckoned in a lower sphere,  
 “ as to the administration of the house,  
 “ and the succession of their sons.—They  
 “ are a lawful kind of *concubines*, who are  
 “ joined to their husbands by a *matrimonial*  
 “ tie, so that they cannot rashly be put  
 “ away; although they may not have a  
 “ full communion of all things with their  
 “ husbands, as *mistresses of the family*, nor did  
 “ they agree [or come together] by *dowry-*  
 “ *contracts*; wherefore the sons born of them  
 “ have not a succession in the heritage of  
 “ the father, with the sons of the *mistress of*  
 “ *the house*. Thus *Abraham* gave gifts to  
 “ the sons born of his *concubines*, who  
 “ were *true wives*, but gave them no por-  
 “ tion of the inheritance.—The concu-  
 “ bines of the holy fathers were of the  
 “ lawful kind. And because the LORD  
 “ will, that the dignities and patrimonies  
 “ which He has conferred on His people,  
 “ should be preserved, it is altogether to  
 “ be wished, that this kind of wives,  
 “ as observed among the holy *patriarchs*,  
 “ might be again observed among *Chris-*  
 “ *tians*, and especially in great and illus-  
 “ trious families, &c.”

There is much good sense in what *Bucer* says, not only as tending to give a scriptural and proper idea of *concubinage*, but also as pointing out a convenient *medium* between men of *family* and *fortune* being obliged to match with *inferior* women whom they may happen to *take*, so as to put them upon a footing with themselves and families, and the liberty of abandoning them to prostitution and ruin.

This hint of *Bucer's*, with respect to *Christians*, seems to have been taken in some parts of *Germany*; where we are told of *wives* of a sort of *second degree*, which they call *left-handed wives*; these are indeed taken with more ceremony, but, in other respects, differ little in their situation from the antient *concubines*. See *Chambers*, Tit. HAND—and MARRIAGE.

*Dr. Alexander, Hist. Wom.* vol. ii. p. 267. writes thus concerning this custom in *Prussia* — “ Though their code of laws  
 “ seems in general to be as reasonable,  
 “ and as consistent with sound policy as  
 “ any in *Europe*, yet we still find in it an  
 “ allowance given for a species of that  
 “ *concubinage* which has long since been  
 “ expelled from almost all the *western*  
 “ world. A man may there marry what  
 “ is called a *left-handed wife*, to whom he  
 “ is married for life, and by the common  
 “ ceremony—the only difference is, the  
 “ bridegroom

“ bridegroom gives her his *left* hand in-  
 “ stead of his right—but with this ex-  
 “ press agreement, that neither she nor  
 “ her children shall live in the house of  
 “ her husband, nor shall take his name,  
 “ nor bear his arms, nor claim any  
 “ dower or donation usually claimed by  
 “ every other wife, nor dispose of any  
 “ part of his property, exert any autho-  
 “ rity over his servants, nor succeed to  
 “ his estates or his titles; but shall be  
 “ contented with what was agreed on  
 “ for their subsistence during his life, and  
 “ with what he shall give them at his  
 “ death. This privilege, however, is al-  
 “ ways in the power of the *king* to deny,  
 “ and is seldom granted to any but such  
 “ of the nobility as are left with large  
 “ families, and, from the smallness of  
 “ their fortunes, cannot afford to marry  
 “ another legal wife, and rear up another  
 “ family of the same rank with them-  
 “ selves.”

There are certainly in the above very  
 strong traces of the antient *concubinage*,  
 which was allowed and practised under  
 the *divine law*. If such a custom as this  
 prevailed among us, and was enforced on  
 men of *rank* and *fashion*, who are now  
 turned loose on the *lower order of females*,  
 and debauch them at *free cost*, without  
 being



being under the least responsibility towards them—it would not only prove a happy check to the most mischievous licentiousness in many instances, but be also a means of preventing the utter ruin of *thousands*, who, under the present *system* of things, are seduced, abandoned, and destroyed, without any *remedy* whatsoever, or almost any possibility of *escape*.



END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

